

# **Exploring YouTube as an Interactive Platform for Journalism Skills Learning among Mass Communication Undergraduate Students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza**

Frank Fransia Katabi  
St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza

## **Abstract**

YouTube is considered a social medium which can facilitate both formal and informal learning practices. However, to fully understand and incorporate its educational values in the formal learning of journalism skills, there was a need to establish a prior understanding about use of YouTube for journalism skills informal learning among communication undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza. Framed within constructivism research paradigm, this study adopted phenomenology research design in which qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions, and qualitative content reviews, and analyzed thematically based on Creswell's Data Analysis Spiral.

The findings indicate that, independent learning, abundant and affordable educational contents, adaptability, information and news updates, entertainment, contents creation and monetization are major factors influencing YouTube-based informal learning. Also, through YouTube educational videos that lecture, demonstrate, and narrate, research participants are able to learn media contents creation and production skills as well as communication and news presentation skills. Hence, despite such challenges as financial constraints and unreliable internet access, language barrier, irrelevant contents, YouTube-based adverts, ineffective interaction between, and imbalance between YouTube videos and formal education, YouTube-based informal learning compliments formal journalism education by providing videos for procedural or practical journalism skills learning, enjoyable learning experience, and interaction between content creators and users.

Based on the findings, therefore, the study concludes that YouTube-based informal learning enables communication undergraduate students to gain journalism skills at the selected university. Moreover, the findings confirm the Uses and Gratifications Theory as proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch (1974). However, future studies should quantitatively examine the explored phenomenon, focus on other population and disciplines, examine individual skills identified in the current study, and determine the extent to which YouTube-based learning contributes to students' academic performance.

**Key terms:** Internet, New media, Web 2.0, Video sharing sites, Social media, Website Journalism, Journalism skills

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Shelly and Frydenberg (2011) observe that in recent years, internet has transformed from being static to being more dynamic, and that, in turn, has changed the way people use it. Further, the authors notice that when internet was still a static medium of communication, people were passive users or consumers of internet-based contents; they could only access and share information through internet pages. This aspect was, therefore, referred to as Web 1.0 (Shelly and Frydenberg, 2011). And, when the internet became dynamic, web or internet pages became more interactive, allowing users to not only access and share information, but to participate in generating internet or web-based contents (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Lister et al., 2009).

Moreover, the change is also marked by the increase of various web-based applications and sites that enable internet users to interact in virtual or online environments, and share various user-generated content through internet-connected devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and computers (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Lister et al., 2009). This transformation is what is generally referred to as Web 2.0, a concept developed by Tim O'Reilly in 2003 (Lister et al., 2009). Furthermore, Web 2.0 embeds various web-based interactive applications, including websites, blogs, wikis, social media, cloud computing, as well as video sharing sites including YouTube (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011).

### **1.1 An overview of YouTube**

YouTube is a web-based application and a video sharing service that gives users access to upload, search for, view, and comment on various videos (Fat et al., 2011). The site allows users to create their own personal YouTube channels and upload videos, subscribe or follow other people's YouTube channels, and create playlists to organize videos to watch (Webwise, 2023). Furthermore, Webwise (2023) adds that YouTube service can be accessed on various internet-connected devices, including personal computers (PCs), tablets, and mobile phones.

Historically, YouTube was created and registered on February 14, 2005 by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim (Kwan et al., 2008 cited in Alhamami, 2013). However, in 2006, it was acquired by Google Company (Sharma & Sharma, 2021), and is now headquartered in San Bruno, California. Further, it is noted that YouTube has become the second largest internet search engine after Google Search (Pereira, 2020). With over 1.5 billion active users every month, whereby each user spends an average of one hour and fifteen minutes watching videos on the platform every day, the site is the home for 400 hours of new video contents every day (Pereira, 2020).

Since the first video was posted on YouTube in 2005, the site has undergone a number of changes and improvements in terms of interface and new features, such as hosting 16-second videos to full-length videos, monetisation through the inclusion of adverts, and improvement in video quality from 360p/480p (low quality videos) to 720p/1080p high-definition videos (Pereira, 2020). Besides, Pereira (2020) adds that there has been the introduction of automatic subtitles, enhanced by speech detection technology, a live streaming tool, and YouTube Premium, a paid version of the YouTube service that does not contain advertisements. Having gained a global reach and popularity, YouTube is now available in 76 languages with local versions in 88 countries. It has become a free internet-based platform supporting user-generated video contents (Liu & Luo, 2021).

YouTube is one of the social media platforms (DeWitt et al., 2013). Gladys et al. (2019) add that social media platforms have become ubiquitous tools in different areas of people's lives. Statistically, the number of users has recently increased from 970 million in 2010 to 2.46 billion in 2017 (Gladys et al., 2019). It was estimated to reach 3.96 billion in 2022 (Skillademia, 2023), and so far, Africa accounts for 6% of all social media users globally (Gladys et al., 2019). The website has become an influential tool that facilitates communication in different areas of people's lives including economy, politics, culture, education, journalism practices, marketing and advertising, and entertainment (Pereira, 2020; Kwan et al., 2008 cited in Alhamami, 2013).

### **1.2 YouTube in Journalism**

As a new medium of communication, internet has influenced and transformed the way journalism industry is operated (Deori et al., 2022). The Web 2.0 tools have influenced journalists and media organizations to adopt conventional and digital journalism skills, and to use social media platforms including YouTube as news platforms (Fahmy, 2008). Therefore, as a social medium, YouTube has become instrumental in distributing news stories to diverse audiences particularly the young generations

(Muckerjee, 2016). Moreover, Santín and José-María (2020) add that, apart from disrupting journalism industry, YouTube has forced news media to re-define their operations and strategies in terms of news content creation, distribution, marketing, and promotion. As a result, YouTube has become part of audio-visual value chain news business model in which news media are increasingly creating their own YouTube channels for news content distribution (Santín & José-María, 2020).

### **1.3 YouTube in learning practices**

In recent years, there has been an increasing trend of using communication technologies in teaching and learning practices (Noortyani, 2019). Mtega et al. (2013) add that the recent technological advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have transformed ways of teaching and learning from traditional mode to web-based mode in higher learning institutions. The transformation has led to emergence of various interactive Web-Based Learning Tools (WBLTs) which in turn provide flexible learning opportunities for students (Kay, 2010, cited in Mtega, et al. 2013). The web-based tools include such platforms as social media, wikis, blogs, forums and discussion sites, as well as video-sharing sites such as YouTube (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011).

Moreover, Rachmijati et al. (2019) assert that communication technologies have improved and transformed education process and learning activities. This is because the improvements present opportunities for people to learn through different websites and internet-based applications (Putri et al., 2020). The transformation has brought the so-called blended learning in which students engage in both face-to-face learning and internet-based learning (Rachmijati et al., 2019). YouTube is no longer a virtual space for providing only entertainment but also for providing learning resources that can support self-directed learning through hosting different educational videos (Lee et al., 2017).

Several studies have been done on how YouTube is or can be a learning tool for students. In this observation, statistical analysis by Snelson (2011) revealed that there is an enormous amount of empirical literature about application of YouTube for academic purposes in different academic disciplines. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic Liu and Luo (2021) quantitatively realized that use of YouTube as a supplement learning tool was influenced more by perceived ease of using YouTube, perceived usefulness of using YouTube, and YouTube self-efficacy in China. In connection to that, Mady and Baadel (2020) statistically found that students utilize YouTube for learning purposes and that the educational social media facilitates students' academic performance in United Arab Emirates. Similarly, in their study, Habes et al. (2020) found that postgraduate students' engagement in e-learning through YouTube was influenced by social bookmarking, YouTube features, and perceived usefulness of the social media at the Yarmouk University in Jordan. Moreover, in Saud Arabia, Almobarraz (2016) quantitatively revealed that YouTube is a potential tool that supports learning and most students are interested in using it for learning purposes outside classrooms.

In India, Sharma and Sharma (2021) qualitatively confirmed that YouTube impacts educational and learning experiences of all levels of students, and that the site provides alternative explanations and procedures to complex ideas and procedures. Also, in Turkey, a qualitative study by Cihangir and Çoklar (2021) determined that, despite adverts, premium suggestions, bullying attitude, and negative comments, good educational videos should have understandable lectures, present adequate knowledge on a subject matter, and base on good visual and audio quality. Additionally, at University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa, based on mixed methods research approach, Olasina (2017) established that YouTube-facilitated groups outperformed the control group in terms of academic writing. And, Kwegyiriba et al. (2021) quantitatively revealed that students consider YouTube as an appropriate, interesting, and inspirational tool for learning and practical application at Takoradi Technical University in Ghana. In connection to that, after examining viewers' comments, Lee et al. (2017) found that participants' affective sharing, gratitude, and enjoyment demonstrated that, as the source of learning materials, YouTube facilitates an online environment for self-directed learning.

Furthermore, In Tanzania, Mtega et al. (2013) found that students use blogs, Facebook, Wikis, Google Drive, and YouTube for academic purposes at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). Also, a study by Kazoka (2020) statistically confirmed that students at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) are aware of Web 2.0, and that Web 2.0 is mainly used for carrying out group assignments, organizing academic resources, and sharing academic articles. However, apart from learning activities, Masele and Rwehikiza (2021) qualitatively found that the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM),

Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Mzumbe University and Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College (TUDARCo) use Facebook, Twitter (X), and YouTube as social media platforms for communicating about admission procedures, living at college, scholarship opportunities, university events, and new academic programmes. In addition, the identified platforms are used to facilitate interaction with various customers and stakeholders.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

It has been widely established that YouTube has become an influential communication tool in both journalism and education practices. This is because the platform supports teaching and learning by hosting diverse educational videos that demonstrate, narrate, and lecture. Moreover, YouTube has become a digital mainstream medium for journalism practices. Not only do journalists use the platform for creating and distributing news contents, but also for engaging with audiences who consume news contents. But, to fully understand how to utilize educational values and potentialities of YouTube, and to be able to incorporate it in the formal learning of journalism skills for Mass Communication students at the selected university, there was a need to establish a prior understanding of whether on their own, without being experimented on, guided, or supervised, Mass Communication undergraduate students use YouTube for learning journalism skills.

In addressing this situation, however, three issues still prevailed, that is, how YouTube-based learning compliments journalism skills attained in formal learning, factors motivating the use of YouTube for learning journalism skills, and kinds of journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students learn through YouTube had not yet been clearly addressed at the selected university. And, therefore, from the identified issues, the main emerging question was; ‘Is YouTube used as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills among Mass Communication undergraduate students at the selected university?’ Hence, from a qualitative perspective and as Beautemps and Bresges (2021) recommend, this study explored YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills among Mass Communication undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.

### **2.1 Research Objectives**

#### **2.1.2 The main research objective**

The main objective of this study was to explore YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills among Mass Communication undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.

#### **2.1.3 The specific research objectives**

This study was guided by the following specific research objectives: -

- i. To explore factors motivating Mass Communication undergraduate students to use YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.
- ii. To determine kinds of journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students learn through YouTube as an interactive platform at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.
- iii. To examine how YouTube-based learning compliments journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students acquire in formal class sessions at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.

#### **2.1.4 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions: -

- i. What are the factors motivating Mass Communication undergraduate students to accept YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza?
- ii. Which journalism skills do Mass Communication undergraduate students learn through YouTube as an interactive platform at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.
- iii. How does YouTube-based learning compliment journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students acquire in formal class sessions at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.



### **3. Theoretical Literature Review**

#### **3.1 YouTube in Journalism**

Hanson and Haridakis (2008) argue that despite being unpopular as traditional Television news viewership, YouTube has become instrumental for on-demand and convenient news contents distribution and viewership. Also, Burgess and Green (2018) assert that YouTube has become a digital mainstream media which has transformed and re-defined professional media in terms of production and distribution of media contents. It has become a news channel and a digital global platform of journalism as it provides journalists with opportunities to produce and distribute news contents to diverse audiences (Sumiala & Tikka, 2013; Santín & José-María, 2020).

Moreover, this social medium and digital news platform is used by both mainstream media and amateur media practitioners to inform, entertain and engage global publics, news stories published on YouTube reflect those published on traditional media, and news videos produced for YouTube adopt the traditional journalistic production techniques and practices (Djerf-Pierre, 2019).

In addition, YouTube Basics for Journalists (2023) adds that the site has become an instrumental tool in journalism practices. News publishers can create their own YouTube channels for increasing number of audiences, engaging their audiences through viewers' subscriptions, responding to audiences' comments, knowing audience's reactions to news stories, and allowing audiences to share news stories and add their own news videos: user-generated-contents (YouTube Basics for Journalists, 2023; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008). News publishers can also use YouTube as a platform for monetization of news contents and thus generate revenues (Santín & José-María, 2020; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008).

Further, it is noted that authenticity, spontaneity, and originality of news videos influence audiences consider YouTube as the news platform (Tolson, 2010, cited in Sumiala & Tikka, 2013). The conception of preferring authenticity as a motivating factor for videos on YouTube is further verified in a study by Holland (2016). Santín and José-María (2020) add that with YouTube, journalists are able to distribute audio-visual reports through live-streaming mode on YouTube.

Apart from that, being a platform that support user-generated-contents makes Towner and Dio (2011) consider YouTube a credible source of news stories. This is because news contents are free from mainstream media houses control and gatekeeping, and news stories can be delivered to audiences as they are (Towner & Dio, 2011). In that case, YouTube may be able to cover news contents that traditional media cannot cover (Santín & José-María, 2020). As audiences become active participants, they can create their own news contents (Hanson & Haridakis, 2008). Also, audiences turn to YouTube for news stories because the platform delivers news contents in terms of popularity and relevance to them, visual appeals of news contents, and ability of the site to reach diverse audiences (Sumiala & Tikka, 2013).

#### **3.2 YouTube as an educational social medium**

Gracella and Nur (2019) observe that learning involves communication among learners, educators, and sources of learning materials. Communication, in this context, refers to an interactive, continuous, conscious, and unconscious process by which, through verbal and non-verbal language, participants attempt to make ideas, thoughts, or information common to each other (Pearson & Nelson, 1997; Wood, 2006). The act of sharing ideas, thoughts, and information reflects the aspect of spiritual self in which humans as communicating beings not only have the ability to construct knowledge, but also the ability of sharing it among themselves (Beebe et al., 2004). However, one key element that enables sharing and accessing ideas, thoughts, and information is the media as means of communication (Pearson & Nelson, 1997). Apart from that, there are several categories of media including traditional print media (newspapers, periodicals, or books), traditional electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), and the Internet as digital means of communication (Paul & Rai, 2021).

Compared to other traditional media, Internet is considered as new medium by which participants can communicate through such internet-based platforms as social media (Lee, 2012). Social media are those internet-based sites or online media which allow users (individuals or organisations) to connect and interact openly, form online communities, and thus, participate in generating and sharing different media contents in the form of sounds, pictures, videos, and texts depending on their common goals and interests (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Paul & Rai, 2021). The main focus of social media has been connecting people with similar personal, social or professional interests (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011). Moreover, social media can further be categorised in the form of blogs, microblogging sites such as Twitter, and social networks including Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp (Shelly & Frydenberg,

2011). Others include wikis, forums and discussion sites, photo sharing sites such as Instagram, and video sharing sites such as YouTube (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Paul & Rai, 2021).

Additionally, the advancements in Information and Communication Technologies have led to emergence of Net Generation (Roodt & Peier, 2013). The Net Generation includes students who are mostly interested in using the Web 2.0 tools such as YouTube, blogs, and wikis for education purposes (Roodt & Peier, 2013). Born at the time of flourishing digital technologies from 1982, natives of the Net Generation are considered to have grown alongside digital technologies such as computers, smartphones, internet, and different tools of Web 2.0 (Berk, 2009). As a result, this generation is naturally digital oriented (Berk, 2009). Moreover, Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) suggests that the Net Generation is characterised by digital literacy, connections through tools of Web 2.0, quick response to communication technologies, desires to learn through practical environment, and expressive socialization interaction. Its members focus much on things that matter and prefer learning through visual and interactive teaching and learning materials (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005).

As an internet-based means of communication, therefore, YouTube is considered as one of social media that provide various audio and visual learning resources (Gracella & Nur, 2019). Apart from that, social media have become part of people's lives providing them with opportunities to share knowledge (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). Also, Li (2017) argues that learning can take place through various forms of media, and that makes YouTube a learning tool. In addition, YouTube has become a piece of technology that has become part of students' efforts to attain knowledge in various areas of their interests through independent learning (Li, 2017).

In adding to the practice of independent learning, Putri et al. (2020) suggest that YouTube facilitates Self-Regulated Learning in which motivated students take their own initiatives to search for knowledge by planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning efforts. With internet-based learning students can participate in learning, connect with experts, and access learning materials wherever they are through watching educational videos on YouTube (Rachmijati et al., 2019). Although Beautemps and Bresges (2021) do not provide actual definition of what educational video is, they suggest that it is that audio-visual material whose intention is to convey knowledge and information to learners. Therefore, as Liu and Luo (2021) put it, there is a significant utilization of YouTube in facilitating out of classes learning, and as internet-based learning resource, YouTube is contributing to the shift from under-guidance learning practices to self-driven learning practices among students.

In terms of education, Gaille (2017) argues that YouTube can be a platform that supports learning activities. YouTube provides access of educational videos to learners regardless where they are, provides supplemental learning resources that can be used in classrooms, and allows learners and teachers or video contents producers to form learning networks (Gaille, 2017). Also, Sari (2019) considers YouTube as an instructional tool providing learning assistance to students in 21<sup>st</sup> century. This observation is further supported by Abbas and Qassim (2020) who see YouTube as not just a platform for uploading, downloading, and commenting on videos, but a site with educational potentialities that can improve skills to students.

Also, in education process, students seem to consider YouTube as an interesting tool that provides instructional learning, improves knowledge transfer, demonstrates complex procedures, and explains ideas that seem complex in simple terms (Kwegyiriba et al., 2021). This notion is supported by Beautemps and Bresges (2021) who consider YouTube as attractive learning platform for young generation. And students who are part of young generation are more digital oriented than those born in pre-information era in terms of using YouTube for learning purposes (McCormick et al., 2010). The site provides simple explanations and demonstrations for students to learn from and unlimited e-learning opportunities for both content creators and learners (McCormick et al., 2010). For that matter, as an educational social medium, YouTube has become an alternative to textbook for knowledge delivery (Almobarraz, 2016).

Burke and Snyder (2008) consider YouTube as a free teaching and learning tool that teachers and learners can take advantage of in knowledge creation and sharing. Also, educational YouTube videos can be categorised in terms of demonstrations, narrations, and recorded lectures (Roodt et al., 2014). In all the categories of YouTube videos, one finds diverse number of educational contents and information especially on the so-called YouTube EDU channel: a home for abundant learning materials on know-how knowledge, tutorials, and lessons for students to learn from (Mady & Baadel, 2020).

In supporting the arguments that YouTube is or can be an ideal platform that supports learning, Lange (2019) contends that learners can engage in socially oriented, engaging, and self-paced or self-directed informal learning processes, and thus acquire any kind of knowledge on YouTube through novice to the professionally produced video contents and comments from other viewers. The key idea being postulated here is based on the act of informal learning which, according to Drotner (2008), learner undertakes outside the formal learning system, tends to be unplanned, and it is the learner themselves that takes control of the learning process.

Moreover, informal learning is considered to be more interpersonal between viewers and creators of videos, enjoyable, open-ended, explorative, and focused on personal choices in learning (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Sefton-Green, 2004, cited in Lange, 2019). However, YouTube, as a platform for acquiring knowledge, can facilitate formal learning as well (Sefton-Green, 2004, cited in Lange, 2019). In formal learning, YouTube provides supplementing learning materials to learners (Lange, 2019). Despite such challenges as uneven quality of videos, and being a space where even creators intend to learn from comments of viewers of videos, YouTube can be a platform for supporting learning through experiments, learning about contents, learning through interaction, and incidental learning (Lange, 2019). This means that through YouTube, informal and formal learning become easy to undertake as the platform could provide different educational videos based on numerous topics for learners to explore and study from on their own.

Although learning can be facilitated by digital and video materials, Ruokamo (2000), Ruokamo et al. (2002, 2003), and Karppinen (2005) argue that in order for digital and videos materials to be meaningful in learning, they have to be interactive, collaborative and conversational so that creators and viewers learn from each other in a participatory manner although, in most cases, there may not be direct interaction or conversation between creators and viewers. Also, videos should be constructive and individual so that learners are able to produce knowledge or make sense of what they view on YouTube videos on their own, contextual in a way that makes learners feel that they are experiencing what is being taught in real or simulated environment, emotionally involving and motivating in the sense that they are joyful, interesting, appealing, encouraging to learn, as well as guided.

In addition to what Ruokamo (2000), Ruokamo et al. (2002, 2003), and Karppinen (2005) suggest, Alhamami (2013) notices that it is important to determine whether certain YouTube videos are worth being educational by considering video characteristics in technical aspects such as quality of sound, quality of pictures, length of the videos, tags, descriptions, and labels of what is being presented. Another aspect involves attractiveness whereby videos should be motivational so as to keep viewers interested to watch posted videos, not boring, relevant, and emotionally appealing so that one enjoys what one is watching as noted by Boekaerts and Minnaert (1999) and Sefton-Green (2004) cited in Lange (2019). Apart from that, educational videos must be clear in terms of well-preparedness, arrangements of contents, preciseness, understandable language, and materials or contents, and applicable so that learners can make use of what has been presented in the videos (Alhamami, 2013).

Also, it is important that YouTube videos be checked for content and language appropriateness, validity of the sources, disclaimers for accuracy, and comments of the viewers (Mady & Baadel, 2020). Moreover, YouTube requires internet accessibility, has adverts which could interfere learning sessions, and contains several videos whose contents are educationally inaccurate, unreliable, or unvalidated (Gaille, 2017; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Burke & Snyder, 2008).

### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

Several theories and models explain how learning takes place through online platforms of communication, which, in the context of this study, include YouTube as a video hosting site where various videos, including educational ones, are uploaded for interested viewers to watch and learn from. However, from Mass Communication and Journalism perspective, this study was framed within Uses and Gratifications Theory (UG) by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch (1974).

#### **3.3.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UG)**

This study was be guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (U & G) developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. This theoretical perspective suggests that audiences purposely seek, choose, and use media to fulfil their several realized needs. That is to say, people deliberately choose to use certain media outlet(s) because there are benefits or fulfilments (gratifications) that the selected media will bring to them. In addition, the theory suggests that, the needs that users intend to gratify through media can be Cognitive when users select media in order to fulfill their needs for

acquiring knowledge or getting informed on a particular phenomenon or subject; Affective when users select certain media outlets so as to respond to their emotional, feelings, or pleasure needs; Personal integrative in the sense that users select certain media outlets due to their self-esteem needs; Social integrative when users select media that will enhance their interaction with other people such as family members, friends, colleagues, and the like (Nikata, 2021). In this study, therefore, Uses and Gratifications Theory (1974) explained the deliberate choice that Mass Communication undergraduate students make to use YouTube to satisfy their cognitive needs of learning journalism skills through YouTube-based learning.

### **3.4 Empirical Literature Review**

#### **3.4.1 YouTube in Journalism**

Having noted that news publishers are increasingly relying on YouTube for news distribution (Bruns, 2018), based on mixed methods research approach, Djerf-Pierre et al. (2019) examined the use of YouTube within journalism practices. Basically, the study analysed how audiences were engaged by commenting on YouTube videos about antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the most viewed YouTube videos about AMR between 2016 and 2018. Comments were then compared with journalistic videos based on science topics. The study found that most viewed YouTube videos on AMR were produced by professionals, audience's comments were expressions of emotions, blame and calls for action. Hence, the researchers concluded that journalists play an important role in engaging news consumers on YouTube by facilitating audience discussions about social and political matters. Also, it was realized that journalists use YouTube for publishing videos on political, economic and social/lifestyles. On the other hand, it was realised that popular science videos are based on medicines, scientific or pseudo-scientific, and medical practice changes.

On the other hand, Noortyani (2019) examined students' perspectives on the use of YouTube as the source of educational videos for learning news writing at Universitas Lambung Mangkurat in Indonesia. Methodologically, the study involved mix-method data analysis in which questionnaire were administered to 27 undergraduate students who were given autonomy to search, watch, and learn from YouTube videos about news and news writing. General findings indicate that research participants have freedom to learn different concepts and skills related to news writing from watching news writing videos on YouTube.

Unlike Noortyani (2019), Deori et al. (2022) attempted to study news videos published on YouTube channels owned by five Hindi TV stations in India. The study was based on content analysis, sentiment analysis, and text mining to find out what interests most the viewers of news videos on YouTube channels. In general, data analysis revealed that YouTube has become a news channel in India. However, the studied Hindi TV stations use their YouTube channels to publish more news stories on crime and investigation, politics, health, and protests. Less coverage is given to news stories about travel, science and technology, and religion YouTube channels. Moreover, it was realized that viewers are interested in news videos that encourage their participation in giving comments particularly on crimes, politics, protests, and health.

Similarly, having noted that internet users have become active participants in creating, sharing, and viewing online media contents, Hanson and Haridakis (2008) examined students' tendency of using YouTube for watching and sharing news at Kent State University in United States. To understand news viewership on YouTube from the users-centred perspectives, the study was grounded in Uses and Gratifications theory as proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974). Methodologically, the study was quantitatively done in which questionnaires were distributed to 291 students, and data were analysed statistically. This study found that several factors influenced students to watch and share news contents on YouTube. The need for information motivates participants to watch traditional news contents, the need for entertainment influence participants to watch satire and comedy-related news contents, and the need for interpersonal communication motivates students to share news videos among themselves.

In connection to that, Sumiala and Tikka (2013) studied the uniqueness of YouTube as a media content publishing platform in the context of journalism practices. Based on netnography news stories production and publishing were traced on YouTube, the study found that YouTube encourages amateur journalists to publish news contents. However, the emerging culture of amateur journalism appears to

contradict the professional journalism. As a result, the emerging journalism culture affects the way news contents relate with professional media institutions.

### **3.4.2 YouTube as a platform for learning performing arts**

Hong et al. (2020) studied the acceptance of YouTube as a platform for learning dance. Based on the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) as proposed by Davis (1989), the study involved online questionnaires with the Likert Scale and data were statistically analysed using SPSS. General findings indicate that research participants have a positive attitude towards learning to dance through YouTube videos as the platform appears useful and easy to learn from. Moreover, DeWitt et al. (2013) studied the potential of YouTube for teaching and learning in the performing arts at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The study had a sample of 20 experts specialized in theatre, dance, music, fine arts, animation, and creative writing, and an additional two from TV-movie production. In data collection process, the researchers adopted the Fuzzy Delphi technique in which both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used. Transcripts from semi-structured interviews were used to construct questionnaires from which the data was analysed through negative triangular fuzzy number. The findings show that YouTube can be used as a potential instructional tool in the performing arts, in line with current trends of collaboration and social networking in education.

Similarly, Hanson (2016) assessed the educational value of YouTube videos for beginning instrumental music at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA. A selected sample of 100 videos based on flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and snare drum was systematically evaluated by a panel of three judges, the author, and two outside experts. In addition, the assessment was done basing on eight dimensions of value which included credibility, use of modelling, efficiency, audio/visual quality, engagement, musicality, appropriateness, and overall value. Data were statistically analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24. This study revealed that in terms of raw scores, the judges rated the videos highest in the dimensions of credibility, quality, modelling, but lowest in musicality. Hence, the videos were found to be of average to good pedagogical utility as a supplement to traditional instructions. However, findings show that some videos were questionable since they included non-professional presenters.

### **3.4.3 YouTube as a platform for learning English Language**

Having realized YouTube technology has not been exploited much for learning purposes, Alwehaibi (2011) examined impact of using YouTube in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Princess Noura University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The researcher adopted a quasi-experimental research design based on non-randomized control group pre-test and pro-test design. General findings show that the experimental group scored higher than the control group. Also, the researcher noticed that YouTube technology provided students in the experimental group with enjoyable and entertaining environments, which motivated them to watch, read, write, discuss, interact, and take part in learning activities.

Also, Abbas and Qassim (2020) investigated how active and influential YouTube is as a learning tool among students studying English as a foreign language at Baghdad University. Based on quantitative research approach whereby questionnaires were designed and distributed to 48 students through Telegram for data collection, this study concluded that YouTube has become an important tool in educational process as it attracts students to learn and hosts various learning materials.

Moreover, having noticed how YouTube plays roles in facilitating educational activities, Gracella and Nur (2019) studied how students perceive YouTube as application of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Based on qualitative research approach, general findings indicate that, despite lacking internet connectivity in some cases, selected informants had good perceptions towards YouTube as an application of learning English Language. This is because the site provides students with access to various learning materials, motives them to learn English Language, and improves listening, pronunciation, and speaking skills.

Apart from that, Putri et al. (2020) qualitatively investigated students' perceptions about and strengths and weaknesses of self-directed learning using YouTube for studying English as Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia. Through 4 in-depth interviews, findings show that cognitively, participants have positive perceptions of YouTube; affectively, participants have good feelings about YouTube as it provides a fun and enjoyable learning experience; conatively, participants are able to plan, monitor, and evaluate learning activities on their own. Also, the study indicates that YouTube is a source of different learning materials, it is easy to use and flexible in terms of time and place. However, financial constraints and unreliable internet appear to be hindering effective YouTube-based learning.

Similarly, Kelsen (2009) studied YouTube as a source of supplement learning materials for students studying English as Foreign Language in Taiwan. Based on authenticity of learning materials on YouTube and students' motivation to use YouTube as a learning platform, videos about English Language were prepared for students to watch in classrooms and at home. However, participants were given autonomy to suggest videos to watch on their own. Then, questionnaires were used for data collection and statistics for data analysis. The study findings revealed that YouTube-based learning was interesting, relevant, beneficial, and to somehow motivating. However, the study recommends that students be encouraged to engage in autonomy learning through YouTube videos.

Also, based on experiential learning and constructivism theories to understand how YouTube provides autonomous learning experience, and how students are able to make meanings and interpretations from YouTube educational videos, Chen (2013) investigated applicability of collaborative teaching and learning between teachers and students through YouTube in Taiwan. The aim of the study, therefore, was to find out whether or not it was possible for YouTube to be applied in motivating autonomy learning for students studying English as Foreign Language at the University. Findings revealed that, despite the realisation that YouTube-based learning could facilitate shift from teacher-centred teaching and learning to student-centred learning, this collaborative practice was difficult to implement for studying foreign language.

#### **3.4.4 YouTube as a learning platform in medical context**

Due to limited research in the existing literature on the use of YouTube as a platform for anatomy education, Jaffar (2011) examined YouTube as an Emerging tool in anatomy education at the College of Medicine, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. The study involved Human Anatomy Education (HAE) YouTube Channel to support classroom teaching. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that YouTube can be considered as an effective tool to enhance anatomy instruction if the videos are scrutinized, diversified, and aimed toward course objectives. Similarly, Zyskowski et al. (2016) did a quality analysis of medical information videos on the video platform YouTube on ankle sprain in Germany. Two independent evaluators collected YouTube videos based on multi-dimensional score checklists for the sections including anatomy, risk factors and symptoms, biomechanics, imaging, clinical examination, treatment, rehabilitation measures, and prevention. In addition, videos were searched for based on the terms of ankle sprain, high ankle sprain, ankle pain, and ankle pain distortion. This study concludes that there are a number of low-quality tutorial videos with defective and incorrect information about ankle injuries on YouTube.

Moreover, Girmenez-Perez et al. (2018) conducted a study to evaluate the usefulness of YouTube videos as an educative tool for type 2 diabetes' in Spain. In the research methodology, the selection of videos to be studied was done through a snowball sampling technique based on characters displayed in the videos. Apart from that, the publishing and characters were further categorized as conventional, complementary or alternative medicine, amateur or professional. In determining the usefulness of videos, researchers used the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE7) as a framework for patient-centred diabetes self-management. This study concluded that chances of finding YouTube videos that reflect the applied AADE7 model is low as chances of finding videos with misleading information are high.

Similarly, Girmenez-Perez et al. (2018) did a review peer-reviewed studies done on health-related information on YouTube. In research methodology, the researchers had a sample of 18 previous research. Of those studies, 11 were from the United States, 5 from Europe, 1 from Canada, and 1 from India. Having done a qualitative content analysis on all 18 articles, researchers found that YouTube is increasingly being used as a platform for disseminating health information. Apart from that, Flynn et al. (2015) attempted to examine learning theory and its application to the use of social media in medical education. Done through a workshop of 36 participants who were divided into 6 groups, the study focused on how educational philosophies or conceptual frameworks of participants match with the provided learning theories. The intention was to come up with the consensus on which of the provided learning theories matched with the way participants use social media in medical education. In finding the consensus, 7 learning theories were provided, and these included Connectivism, Social development theory, Community of practice, Cognitive Apprenticeship, Discovery learning, Self-determination, and

Cognitive load theory. General findings from the study indicate that conceptual frameworks of using social media in providing medical education match with the provided learning theories, however, out of 7 provided learning theories, Connectivism appear to be the most widely used learning theory followed by Social Development Theory and Communities of Practice.

### **3.4.5 YouTube as a teaching and learning tool**

Sun (2014) did a study on microteaching writing on YouTube for pre-service teacher training at National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan. In research methodology, the sample had 12 participants who were Taiwanese pre-service teachers. During the study, pre-service teachers prepared microteaching lessons in which they worked in groups and developed video lectures and uploaded these videos onto YouTube. After the study, data was collected through interviews with pre-service teachers, observation, analytical notes, the YouTube lessons, pre-service teachers' reflections, and evaluation reports. Also, in data analysis, survey data was analysed through descriptive statistics to present the distribution of the pre-service teachers' behaviours, perceptions, and attitudes. General findings show that the pre-service teachers held mildly positive attitudes toward the YouTube microteaching project and revealed their gains in the perceptual shift about teaching, connecting theory and practice, and gaining hands-on experience in computer-assisted language learning.

Similarly, Moghavvemi et al. (2018) investigated YouTube as a complementary learning tool for teaching and learning at Malaya university in Malaysia. The researchers employed a mixed methods research approach in which 30 students were given open-ended questionnaires in which questions were based on reasons for using YouTube, whether using YouTube influences academic performance, and whether instructors should use YouTube as a complementary tool for teaching. This study revealed that, of the three themes that emerged through qualitative inquiry, that is, entertainment, seeking information, and academic learning as some of the main reasons why student use YouTube, quantitatively, 89% of students use YouTube for entertainment, 52% for academic learning, 48% for information seeking, and 14% for product inquiry. Moreover, students claimed that they use YouTube as a supplementary tool for learning through academic videos because of the visual cues that simplify their understanding of the subjects being presented.

In Turkey, following the increasing popularity of YouTube as a learning tool in education practices, Burhanli and Bangir-Alpan (2021) explored reasons why students prefer engaging in YouTube-based learning at Gazi University. Based on qualitative research approach in which data were collected through face-to-face interview and qualitatively analyzed, the study revealed that students are motivated to use YouTube for learning because of individual learning needs, ability to manage learning practices through YouTube, and inadequate knowledge obtained through face-to-face education in classroom. Other reasons include availability and accessibility of learning materials as well as flexibility of using YouTube for learning purposes. Also, the study revealed that, when selecting educational videos, students consider appropriateness of educational videos, popularity of educational videos, interesting topics, and how current educational videos are.

Roodt and Peier (2013) investigated whether the use of YouTube in classrooms encouraged of engagement of Net Generation at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Based on interpretative research paradigm in which exploratory research design was used, data were collected through questionnaires and analysis was done through Microsoft Excel. Also, findings from students who had already been exposed to learning through YouTube were compared with findings from students who did not have experience in learning through YouTube videos. In the end, the researchers concluded that students who prefer engaging in YouTube-based learning possessed characteristics, and that YouTube videos had positive influence on students' emotions, behaviour, cognitive, and overall students' engagement in learning.

Also, Roodt et al. (2014) attempted to understand how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) lectures use YouTube in their teaching practices at Rhodes University, the University of Cape Town, University of Johannesburg, University of Pretoria, and University of Zululand in South Africa. Having collected data through web-based questionnaires from the selected universities, the researchers realised that participants use YouTube for both social and academic purposes. However, further analysis of the findings indicates that only one-third of the participants incorporate YouTube in their teaching practices.

In Nigeria, Ogirima et al. (2021) set out to investigate how future teachers perceive the use of YouTube in teaching-learning process in basic schools. Based on Technological Acceptance Model by Fred Davis

(1989), the study adopted descriptive survey research design in which 200 future teachers with experience in teaching were purposely selected as research participants, data were collected through questionnaire, and analysis was statistically done. Reflected from Technological Acceptance Model (TAM), the study revealed that future teachers have positive perceptions towards both ease of use and usefulness towards using YouTube for teaching and learning process. Additionally, gender differences had no significant influence on perceptions.

Moreover, at the Cologne University in German, Beauteemps and Bresges (2021) explored practical rules and criteria that can guide creation and selection of good educational videos for those engaging in leisure or informal learning practices. Based on questionnaires distributed to 5000 participants who watch YouTube videos about natural sciences, statistically analysed data determined that criteria for good educational videos include structure in terms of good flow of topic introduction, presentation of materials, and conclusion, reliability of content presented in terms of containing scientific knowledge, and good audio and visual quality of videos. Other criteria include community integration whereby, as a social network, videos must support interaction between learners and content creator through comments, videos must be presented by credible presenters, and topics covered in YouTube videos are to be interesting to the viewers.

In their study, Lee and Lehto (2012) based on extended Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) to investigate user acceptance of YouTube as a tool for procedural learning in South Korea. The researchers identified user satisfaction, content richness, task technology, vividness, and YouTube self-efficacy (competence acquired) as indicators in determining perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as proposed by the model. 432 participants aged between 20 and 40 years were conveniently sampled, a survey in the secure lab located at Korean University was involved. General findings show that YouTube may be used as a channel for procedural learning and instruction significantly influenced by both perceived usefulness and user satisfaction of the contents provided in the viewed videos. Technology fit, content richness, vividness, and YouTube self-efficacy appeared to predict the perceived usefulness of YouTube as a tool for procedural instruction learning. However, ease of use was not significantly predictive of either perceived usefulness or behavioural intention.

Similarly, having observed that YouTube has become a tool for teaching and learning and that the platform is widely used for academic purposes compared to other social media in Malaysia, but the effectiveness and value of online content for education is still not clear and that the aspect of whether subscription to online platforms for learning purposes influences users' acceptance of YouTube, Yaacob and Saad (2020) wanted to find out whether YouTube was being accepted as a learning platform given that the face-to-face learning environment was limited during COVID-19 in Malaysia. Hence, the study examined whether perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PE), and social influence determined students' use of YouTube as a learning platform. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 340 students, a YouTube channel was created as complimentary to printed materials. This study, researchers found that, under the pandemic crisis, students accepted YouTube as a learning platform and hence proved the Technological Acceptance Model. Moreover, it was not the subscription that determined users' acceptance of YouTube as a learning platform; it was the perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PE), and social influence that determined students' use of YouTube as a learning platform.

#### **3.4.6 YouTube as a gaming learning platform**

In gaming industry, Nicholson (2009) investigated teaching gaming in libraries course via YouTube. The study adopted Open Educational Resources Logic Model whose components include removing barriers, sponsoring high quality open content, understanding and stimulating use, and equalizing access. Having conducted a post-course survey, findings reveal that there was a good number of viewers of the posted videos including librarians, library students, hobby gamers, and member of gaming industry. Thus, the study proved that when contents of the course are made freely available and distributed through such platforms as YouTube, a number of people can be influenced to learn and in turn that will have a great impact on the course itself.

#### **3.4.7. YouTube as a tool for learning Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

In Pakistan, Iftikhar et al. (2019) investigated how simple randomly selected undergraduate students from 9 universities acquire and develop software skills through video tutorials on YouTube. Theoretically, the study was lensed through Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974) and Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Based on a quantitative research approach in which



survey research design was selected, questionnaires were used for data collection, and statistics were used for data analysis, this study concludes that learning tutorials on YouTube help research participants acquire software skills. In South Africa, Maziriri et al. (2020) intended to understand student perceptions towards the use of YouTube as an educational tool for learning and tutorials. Lensed through Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) and Moreno and Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia, the study involved questionnaires for data collection, and in data analysis SPSS version 25 and AMOS version 25 for descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling respectively. General findings indicate that, based on the hypotheses developed, perceived usefulness of YouTube as a tool for learning influences students more than the perceived easiness of using YouTube as a tool for learning.

### 3.5 Research Gap

In the reviewed literature, scholars have established that YouTube supports learning activities through hosting educational videos for viewers to learn from (DeWitt et al., 2013; Gaille, 2017). It is also considered an instructional and learning assistance tool with educational potentialities, and diverse educational videos that demonstrate, narrate, and lecture (Sari, 2019; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Kwegyiriba et al., 2021). It is a learning platform for young generation particularly students (McCormick et al., 2010; Beautemps & Bresges, 2021). Also, it has become repository for knowledge delivery, teaching, and learning (Almobarraz, 2016; Burke & Snyder, 2008; Roodt et al., 2014; Mady & Baadel, 2020). Apart from being a platform for music and entertainment, YouTube has become a repository of educational videos and learning in this digital age Olasina (2017). Moreover, from journalism perspective, YouTube has become an instrumental tool in journalism practices (YouTube Basics for Journalists, 2023). It has become a digital mainstream media for professional and amateur journalists to publish and distribute on-demand news contents to diverse audiences (Hanson & Haridakis, 2008; Burgess & Green, 2018; Sumiala & Tikka, 2013). News publishers create their own YouTube channels to inform, entertain, and engage global publics (Sumiala & Tikka, 2013; Santín & José-María, 2020; Djerf-Pierre, 2019; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008).

Furthermore, from theoretical perspective, Uses and Gratifications Theory (UG) by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch (1974) was found to explain more about YouTube-based learning practices. Also, evidently, it was found that there is a handful of empirical literature on use of YouTube for learning and for journalism practices. However, the majority of reviewed studies examined YouTube as a learning tool in teaching practices (Sun, 2014; Moghavvemi et al., 2018; Burhanli & Bangir-Alpan, 2021; Roodt & Peier, 2013; Roodt et al., 2014; Ogirima et al., 2021; Beautemps & Bresges, 2021; Lee & Lehto, 2012; Yaacob & Saad, 2020), medication (Jaffar, 2011; Zyskowski et al., 2016; Girmenez-Perez et al., 2018; Girmenez-Perez et al., 2018; Flynn et al., 2015), performing arts (Hong et al., 2020; DeWitt et al., 2013; Hanson, 2016), languages (Alwehaibi, 2011; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Gracella & Nur, 2019; Putri et al., 2020; Kelsen, 2009; Chen, 2013), gaming (Nicholson, 2009), software and Information and Communication Technology (Iftikhar et al., 2019; Maziriri et al., 2020). Little literature has looked at the use of YouTube in the context of learning journalism skills (Noortyani, 2019) and practicing journalism (Deori, 2022; Sumiala & Tikka, 2013; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008). Therefore, the current study argues that not much research has been done on students' use of YouTube as an interactive platform for informal learning of journalism skills. If the realized situation continues to prevail, there is a possibility that, as a communication medium, YouTube can remain subjected to the roles of entertaining and informing the audiences only. This could undermine the educational values and potentialities of the YouTube within the journalism domain. Moreover, it is possible that the existing body of knowledge could remain in favor of the traditional and formal learning process. This could render the unconventional and internet-facilitated informal learning process useless. Apart from that, there is a need to understand different efforts that communication students make to enrich their knowledge and skills in other informal sources of learning including YouTube. Understanding this can also be useful in improving the current journalism courses and curricula in universities.

Aside from that, the majority of reviewed studies were conducted quantitatively (both experimental and non-experimental/survey) and through mixed methods research techniques, little information about YouTube usage was gathered qualitatively. The implications of most of the adopted research methodologies in the reviewed studies are that, they may limit researchers from getting more contextual in-depth insights about the YouTube based informal learning. Also, they may not be appropriate in

contexts where little is known about YouTube-based informal learning, and they may limit the understanding about students' own attempts to acquire skills on their own through YouTube videos. Furthermore, in the given context, none of the previously examined literature has provided a theoretical justification or empirical evidence for how, on their own, and without being experimented on, guided, or supervised, individual students watch YouTube videos for learning journalism skills at University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza. Thus, the current study was pursued to fill this knowledge gap by qualitatively exploring YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills among Mass Communication undergraduate students at the selected university.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm implies a pattern of rules, assumptions, general world view, a general belief, or a theoretical perspective that one has towards a particular phenomenon (Gray, 2004; Creswell, 2014). In research, therefore, it is a philosophy or a general set of practices and guidelines by which researchers are able to search for knowledge about a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher used interpretivism/constructivism research paradigm. In this paradigm, the main intention is to understand the way people interpret or construct meanings of the world they live in: the way people contemplate their lives depending on their cultural, historical and social settings (Crotty, 1998, cited in Creswell, 2014 & in Gray, 2004). Also, several reviewed researchers including Roodt and Peier (2013), Olasina (2017), and Chen (2013) adopted interpretivism/constructivism in examining YouTube-based learning. Therefore, based on constructivism/interpretivism, this study explored how Mass Communication undergraduate students gain journalism skills through viewing videos on YouTube channels on their own.

### **4.2 Research Approach**

A research approach is a general procedure or plan that lays the foundation for the type(s) of data that a researcher intends to collect, the research design to be used, data collection, and data analysis methods to be used, as determined by the research paradigm as the philosophical approach to conducting research (Creswell, 2014). Since this study intended to explore how Mass Communication undergraduate students use YouTube as a platform for learning journalism skills through educational videos on their own, a qualitative research approach was adopted. The qualitative research approach is one in which researchers focus on exploring the meanings that people construct out of their natural settings (Creswell & Creswell 2018). It collects non-numerical information through open-ended questions in order to explore a few individuals' perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and behaviours (Dawson, 2007).

As observed in the studies by Putri et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2017), Sharma and Sharma (2021), Burhanli and Bangir-Alpan (2021), and Gracella and Nur (2019), the qualitative research approach facilitated understanding of students' own efforts to search for journalism knowledge and skills through videos posted on YouTube channels. Moreover, since YouTube-based learning deviate from the traditional learning process in classrooms, then this relatively new phenomenon could be well understood when studied qualitatively at the selected university. Moreover, Beautemps and Bresges (2021) recommend a qualitative research approach to understand YouTube-based learning in leisure or informal learning practices.

### **4.3 Research Design**

Since this study explored how students use YouTube as one of the tools in the learning process, to achieve this quest, qualitative research employed a phenomenological research design. The term phenomenology means that which is related to a particular phenomenon or experience. It is the aspect in which understanding a particular phenomenon requires a direct and conscious experience of it, the meaning of the experienced phenomenon to one's own life, and communication through which meaning is assigned to experience; hermeneutic phenomenology (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). It is the research design in which the researcher is interested in understanding people's experiences of a particular situation (Creswell, 2014). In that case, in-depth information about perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular phenomenon is collected from one or more research participants (Leedy et al., 2021). In this study YouTube-based learning is considered a phenomenon. Therefore, with reflections from the studies by Cihangir and Çoklar (2021), and based on a phenomenology research design, the researcher collected qualitative data from Mass Communication undergraduate students who have been using

YouTube for learning journalism skills on their own at St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza.

#### **4.4 Research Location**

A research site is the location where fieldwork will be conducted (Gray, 2004). It is the setting where data is to be collected from the identified population (Kalof et al., 2008). Since this study focused on university students, the selected research site was Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza (Main Campus). SAUT offers several degree and non-degree programs in the Faculty of Business Administration, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication, and School of Law (Prospectus, 2022/2023).

The location was selected because several SAUT students had been casually observed viewing videos on YouTube (although it was not clear what categories of videos they prefer watching most). Moreover, the selected setting was within the reach of the researcher, and thus, it facilitated data collection from the available participants. Hence, it was possible that data to be collected could be richly found within the specified area.

#### **4.5 Population of the Study**

A population implies a collection; it could be a group of people or objects sharing common characteristics (Kalof et al., 2008). Singh (2006) considers it a universe containing an all-inclusive mass of observations or a parent group from which a sample is to be formed. Additionally, it is important that the characteristics of such a collection are identified so that they match with what the research requires as far as the data to be collected is concerned. Since this study was situated within and thus aimed at contributing knowledge in the discipline of Journalism and Mass Communication, then, the population of study included Mass Communication undergraduate students at Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza. These students, moreover, included those who pursue both Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication (BAMC) and Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Marketing (BAPRM) because they all study journalism related courses. However, only communication students who engage in YouTube-based learning were involved in the study.

Although YouTube is globally accessible to any person be it students or not, the participants in this study were university students. Students particularly the young ones were selected because, as noted earlier, they are attracted to learning through YouTube (Beautemps & Bresges, 2021), they are digital oriented in terms of using YouTube for learning purposes (McCormick et al., 2010), and they are part of the Net Generation in which members are interested in using the Web 2.0 tools such as YouTube, blogs, and wikis for education purposes (Roodt & Peier, 2013). Also, students are naturally digital oriented (Berk, 2009), digital literate, and prefer visual and interactive teaching and learning materials (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Apart from that, observation shows that the majority of undergraduate communication students are younger than postgraduate communication students, and most of journalism practical skills are taught in degree and non-degree academic programmes as compared to postgraduate communication studies.

#### **4.6 Sample Size**

Singh (2006) explains sample size as the total number of subjects that one intends to include in one's study. Despite the notion that there is no optimum size of sample (Henn et al., 2006), Singh (2006) suggests that a large sample becomes more representative of the population, particularly in quantitative research. In contrast, Rugg and Petre (2007) reject the idea of large samples, as they argue that when the sample is badly designed, no matter how large it is, it will yield a large amount of useless data. However, this is qualitative research in which there is no optimum number of participants in a sample, as noted by Dawson (2007), and that in qualitative research, a small number of participants or materials is enough since the main goal is to have in-depth understanding and not generalization (Dawson, 2007). Despite the observation that in qualitative the final sample size is obtained after saturation point; the point at which no more new information is obtained (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dawson, 2007), and that studies based on phenomenology research design involve about 10 research participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), in order to obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and validity to ensure of the findings, and due to availability and accessibility of Mass Communication undergraduate students, this study had 33 participants who engage themselves in YouTube-based learning for acquiring journalism skills. Out of those 33 students, 19 participants were second-year students and 14 participants were third-year students. Also, out of those 33 participants, 6 students were interviewed and 27 students were given open-ended questions. Out of 27 students who attempted open-

ended questions, 17 students were male and 10 students were female. Also, out of those 27 students, 21 students were from BAPRM Programme, 2 students were from BAMC programme specialized in Print Media, and 4 students were from BAMC programme specialized in Broadcasting Media. Also, out of 6 students who were interviewed, 4 students were from BAMC programme and 2 students were from BAPRM Programme, and all 6 students were third-year male students. Furthermore, 17 YouTube channels pages that provide journalism skills, informational, and news contents were visited and reviewed to verify different claims made by research participants.

#### **4.7 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling is the process of selecting representatives from a population, not in terms of size (Rugg & Petre, 2007); it is also the process of creating a sample (Singh, 2006). Since this study is qualitative and does not seek generalization of the findings beyond the scope of available information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dawson, 2007), non-probability sampling techniques were adopted. The selected sampling procedure does not offer equal chances for every participant to be included in the study, and the selected research participants are usually not representative of the population from which they are drawn (Kalof et al., 2008).

The advantage of using a non-probability sampling technique in the context of this study is that it will direct the researcher to purposefully select and focus only on students who engage in YouTube-based learning. However, to avoid sampling bias, the researcher is advised to include a variety of participants (Kalof et al., 2008), that is, heterogeneous samples (Dawson, 2007). In view of this observation, the researcher selected Mass Communication undergraduate students from first, second, and third year. Moreover, research participants were selected using the following non-probability sampling techniques:

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##### **4.7.1 Purposeful sampling technique**

Creswell and Creswell (2018) notice that qualitative researches are associated with purposefully selected research participants. In this non-probability sampling technique in which only those who are research participants are deliberately selected based on researcher's subjective decisions on the appropriateness of participants in the study (Henn et al., 2006), the purpose of the study, or certain criteria considered important in the research (Leedy et al., 2021; Singh, 2006; Gray, 2004). With reflections from studies by Putri et al. (2020), Ogirima et al. (2021), Kazoka (2020), and DeWitt et al. (2013), this sampling technique enabled the researcher to deliberately select Mass Communication undergraduate students who use YouTube for learning journalism skills. It was also used for selecting specific YouTube channels that research participants visit for learning journalism skills.

##### **4.7.2 Snowball sampling technique**

Snowball sampling technique involves purposefully selecting research participants who are relatively difficult to contact (Henn et al., 2006). It builds network of research participants through asking previous informants to suggest other informants with similar situation under investigation (Blaxter et al., 2006; Rugg & Petre, 2007; Gray, 2004). By referring to the study by Girmenez-Perez et al. (2018), this technique was selected in order for the researcher to contact currently unlisted and unknown Mass Communication undergraduate students who use YouTube for learning journalism skills at the selected university. Moreover, the technique facilitated data collection through semi-structured interviews because the first research informants linked the researcher to other research participants with experiences of YouTube-based learning of journalism skills.

##### **4.7.3 Convenience sampling technique**

Apart from selecting research participants purposely and through snowball sampling techniques, other research participants were obtained conveniently. Convenience sampling or accidental sampling involves selection of participants who are readily available (Leedy et al., 2021). This sampling technique was used during the distribution of open-ended questionnaires to communication students through the Google Forms; an internet-based platform for creating, distributing, and analyzing (quantitative) data (Google Forms, 2024). The purpose of using convenience sampling technique, therefore, was to invite any Mass Communication undergraduate student who was willing to participate in the study to do so.

#### **4.8 Data Collection Methods**

Data collection involves the whole process of gathering data from the field within a particular research structure (Rugg & Petre, 2007). The point made in this observation is that there is a particular structure guiding data collection. The structure is the research approach that determines research design and, in

turn, the design influences data collection methods. Based on this observation, this study applied the following qualitative data collection methods: -

#### **4.8.1 Semi-structured interview**

Semi-structured interview is the non-standardized conversation between a researcher and an informant (Dawson, 2007). It involves having a list of prepared but flexible open-ended questions or topics; interview schedule which may be asked to all identified informants (Dawson, 2007). This particular data collection method has been applied by different previous researches that investigated YouTube-based learning. With reference from studies by DeWitt et al. (2013), Burhanli and Bangir-Alpan (2021), Gracella and Nur (2019), and Cihangir and Çoklar (2021), the adoption of semi-structured interview will help the researcher to remain focused on the topic at hand while maintaining the qualitative nature of the study. Also, the researcher used semi-structured interview to gather information from six (6) Mass Communication undergraduate students who use YouTube as a platform of learning journalism skills. Four (4) of these students were from Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication (BAMC) and other four (2) students were from Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Marketing (BAPRM) programmes.

Semi-structured interviews assisted in exploring initial and in-depth understanding about engagement of research participants in YouTube-based learning of journalism skills. Additionally, it helped the researcher to develop codes and themes that were further used as coding frames and references in analysing and triangulating data from the distributed open-ended questions and qualitative content analysis methods.

#### **4.8.2 Open-ended questions**

Apart from semi-structured interviews, other data were collected through open-ended questions. These are qualitative data collection tools which do not have multiple choices but only blank sections for the participants to write in answers (Dawson, 2007). Also, Gray (2004) adds that open-ended questions do not have definitive responses, they elicit answers that are recorded in full, and contain questions that focus on words such as 'How', 'Why', and 'What'. Apart from that, the main focus of using open-ended questionnaires is to explore opinions which are rather than numbers, and thus fewer questionnaires need to be distributed (Dawson, 2007). Therefore, open-ended questionnaires were generated and distributed to Mass Communication undergraduate students through Google Forms; an internet-based platform for creating, distributing, and analyzing (quantitative) data (Google Forms, 2024). The distribution was done through the link that was shared on WhatsApp. The link is <https://forms.gle/EKRHSLBe8wxvC7SQ7>.

Also, a total of 27 questionnaires were filled and submitted, and a PDF document and an Excel Sheet containing all the questions and answers from each research participant were extracted and treated as transcripts during data analysis process. In general, despite being relatively difficult to combine and analyze all responses, open-ended questions provided rich information that was triangulated with data from semi-structured interviews for further validation of the findings. Also, the open-ended questions elicited various perspectives and experiences from research participants who had not been interviewed about learning journalism skills through YouTube educational videos. Moreover, in analysis open-ended questions, codes from semi-structured interviews were used as coding frame.

#### **4.8.3 Qualitative content reviews**

Content analysis is that method of data collection by which a researcher examines and studies meanings embedded or occurrences of contents in various visual and non-visual communicative materials (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is alternatively referred to unobtrusive measures in which data are collected from non-reactive sources including documentary evidence, physical evidence and archival analysis (Gray, 2004). Moreover, Leedy et al. (2021) suggest that content analysis examines details of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases. It involves visual materials (symbols, signs, arts, objects, poetry, films/movies, music, photos, videos, song lyrics, graphittis etc.), languages, recorded conversations, books, texts, and media contents (internet-based media contents, documentaries, television/radio programmes, newspapers, magazines, adverts, etc.). Others include documents (legal documents, personal journals, transcripts of conversations), speeches, as well as recorded conversations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy et al., 2021). In the current study, qualitative content analysis was used to review 13 YouTube channels that research participants mentioned. In general, content reviewed involved nature of the YouTube channels, contents provided, as well as viewers' comments particularly for videos that provided procedural or practical learning.

Moreover, the identified themes from semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used as the coding frame to verify what research participants reported. This research method therefore, provided further insights and evidences to confirm the existence of YouTube educational videos that provide journalism skills as explained by the research participants.

#### **4.8.4 Trustworthiness and Consistency of the Study**

Leedy et al. (2021) explains trustworthiness as an aspect of checking credibility of the research in terms of accuracy, confirmability, and interpretive thoroughness. It therefore involves ensuring appropriateness of research approach, design, and methods in responding to the research question or problem, accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings, and rigour in interpreting findings (Leedy et al., 2021). As suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2008) and Leedy et al. (2021), trustworthiness in this study was checked and ensured through triangulation of findings from semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and qualitative content review for coherence of themes. Triangulation has been used by researchers such as Masele and Rwehikiza (2021), Olasina (2017), Sun (2014), and Tibaijuka (2016). Also, thoroughness was checked through gathering rich information for thick descriptions of phenomenon by asking open-ended questions, personal reflections, and participants validation to get more insights and to ensure whether interpretations and conclusions match the perspectives of the participants.

On the other hand, consistency is about ensuring that research methods applied consistently provide similar results (Leedy et al., 2021). Based on suggestions of Gibbs (2007, cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the researcher observed consistency of semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and qualitative content review in several ways. First, by ensuring that transcripts contain data that were meant to be obtained through research methods used, comparing raw data with the developed codes and themes, and cross-checking whether other previous reviewed researchers used or recommended the same or similar selected methods in studying the same phenomenon.

#### **4.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data analysis involves breaking down findings collected from the field and rearranging them for interpretation: transforming raw data into meaningful information in relation to the research goals (Singh, 2006). Since this study collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions, and qualitative content reviews, then, with reflections from For example, Burhanli and Bangir-Alpan (2021), Olasina (2017), Lee et al. (2017), Sun (2014), and Myumbo (2018), data analysis was done thematically as suggested by Dawson (1997).

Moreover, in practice, the researcher did data analysis based on what Leedy et al. (2021) refers to as Creswell's Data Analysis Spiral which involves organizing all data, developing codes, generating descriptions and categories or themes, and describing relationships among the categories or themes. Based on this procedure, data analysis was done sequentially whereby all data was brought together as transcriptions and arranged depending on the sources and similar texts, and then the researcher read and made sense of all the organized data as proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018). After that, all similar texts were organized and labelled together under terms called codes, similar codes were brought together into categories or themes, and then relationships among the categories or themes were explained as recommended by Leedy et al. (2021).

Emerging themes from the semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions, and qualitative content reviews were looked at for interpretation. In general, themes for factors influencing YouTube-based learning were independent learning, abundant and affordable educational contents, YouTube adaptability, information and news updates, entertainment, and contents creation and monetisation. Also, themes for the learned journalism skills were media contents creation and production skills, as well as communication and presentation skills. Apart from that, themes on how YouTube-based learning compliments formal journalism education were procedural/practical journalism skills learning, diverse and timely journalism skills, as well as flexible and self-guided learning

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Findings

*Specific research objective one: To explore the factors motivating Mass Communication undergraduate students to use YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.*

#### Students' preferences of watching videos on YouTube

There are several online platforms providing access to watching videos. However, general factors motivating research participants to engage themselves in watching videos on YouTube channels include the following: -

##### i. Information and news updates

It was generally realized that participants watch YouTube videos for being informed about several events happening in the societies. This suggests that YouTube, therefore, is used as a communication platform or channel for accessing news stories, documentaries and other informational contents. For example, two research participants said:

*"YouTube has plenty of information."* (Participant 1)

*"Through YouTube I prefer to watch most videos which are related to the societies in order to be aware about different things and issues."* (Participant 2)

Another participant said that they watch different news channels including Millard Ayo for getting updates. This YouTube channel is accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@millardayoTZA>.

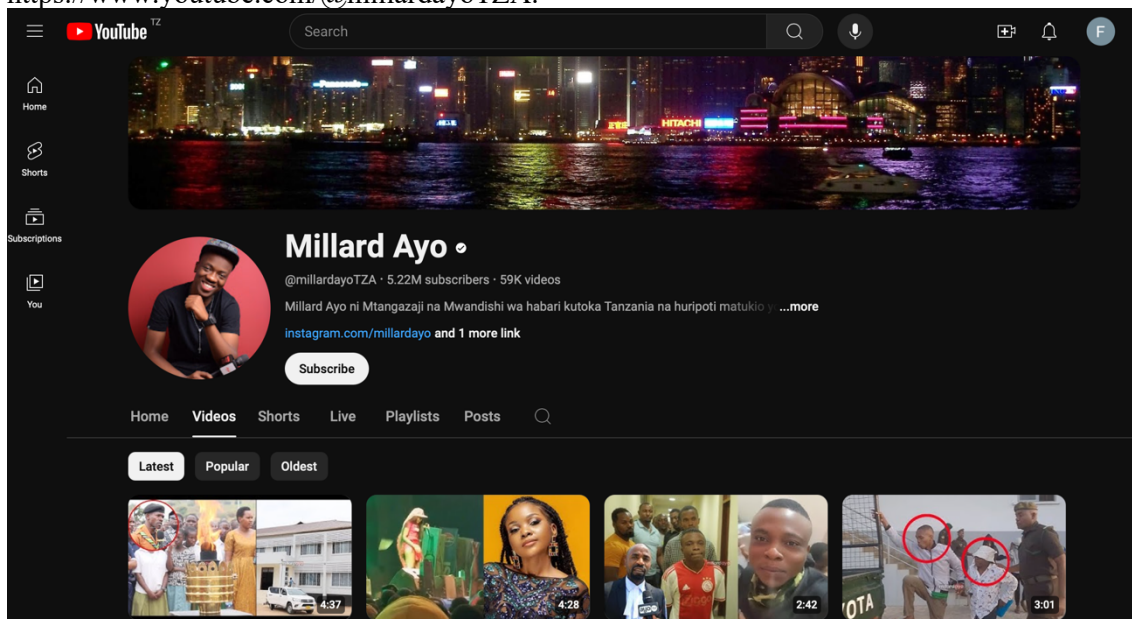


Figure 1: Millard Ayo YouTube Channel

##### ii. Entertainment

It was found that the selected research participants approach YouTube not only as an informational tool, but also as the entertainment platform. Informants claimed that YouTube provides different entertainment contents be it music, movies, talk shows, parody, memes, comedy etc. From the semi-structured interview, one participant said:

*"I go to YouTube when I want to refresh mind".* (Participant 1)

##### iii. Learning

Another reason for watching videos on YouTube was found to be related with learning. In this, it was realized that informants watch videos on YouTube for learning different skills through tutorials. It was claimed that YouTube provides affordable accessibility to abundant learning materials and hosts plenty of information that one maybe looking for. It was mentioned that one can learn by accessing demonstrative videos with details from 30 minutes to one hour and without paying much money.



Data have also revealed that the accessibility of YouTube is due to the fact that the platform is linked with other google applications. This suggests that the platform is readily available for any learner who wishes to use view its hosted education videos. In explaining more about learning by watching educational videos on YouTube, different research participants from both semi-structured interviews and distributed open-ended questions said:

*“I use YouTube for learning about journalism since it is more practical”. (Participant 1)*

*“There is convenience and flexibility because YouTube allows me to access content at any time, any location, and also provides the flexibility to fit learning into my schedule”. (Participant 2)*

*“Because it is a platform which could provide a direction on how to perform something and also, it enables in knowledge acquisition by an individual”. (Participant 3)*

*“I am interested to watch [video on YouTube] in order to understand more on theory or knowledge through learning from YouTube [which] can foster understanding than use of textbook”. (Participant 4)*

*“I use YouTube to learn how other graphics designers use tools and designing techniques in designing programmes”. (Participant 5)*

*“I prefer watching videos on YouTube because is among of platforms that enable me to gain new skills from different expertise especially in communication perspectives. For example, watching different videos including presentation on TED Talk, and different speeches such as political speech, economic development speeches and motivation speeches”. (Participant 6)*

The TED Talk can be accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@TED>.

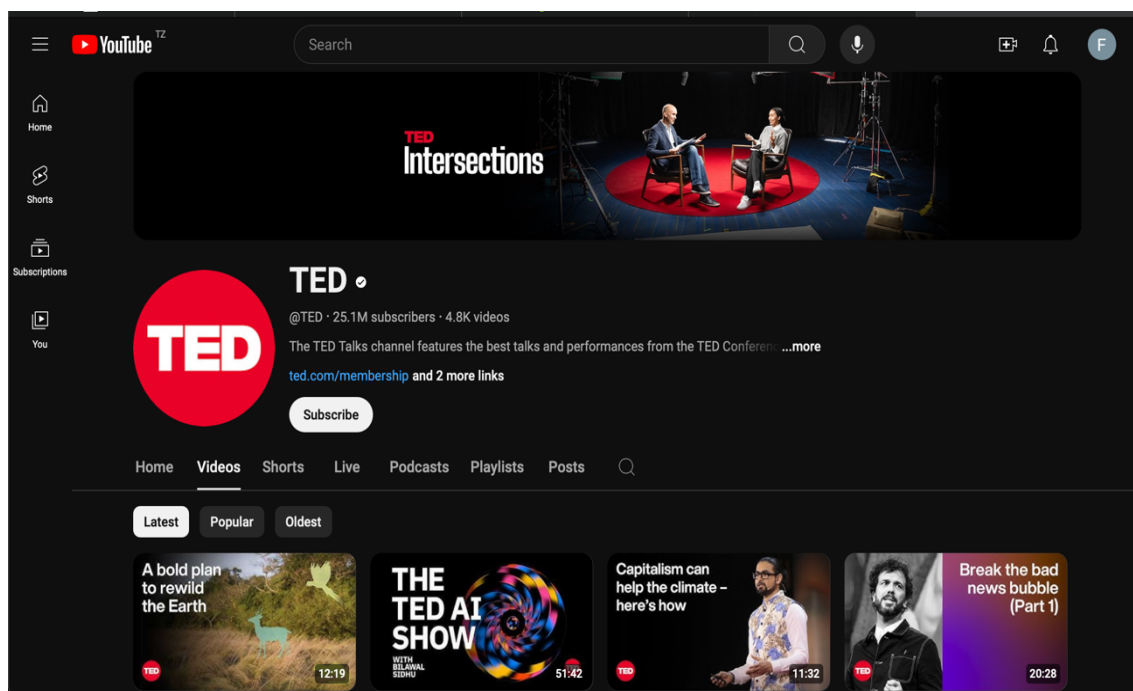


Figure 2: TED YouTube Channel

#### iv. Content creation for monetization

Other participants observed that one can learn how to create content through YouTube. That, ultimately, can make one become a content creator and sell videos especially when the videos have a significant number of views. Hence, contents creators can make money through subscriptions on YouTube. In their explanations from semi-structured interviews, two research participant noted:



*"I wish to open my YouTube channel for becoming a content creator."* (Participant 1)

*"I like observing other content creators in order to become a unique citizen journalist."*  
(Participant 2)

In general, communication undergraduate students use YouTube channel as a convenient communication platform for learning different topics of their interests, getting information and news stories about different societal and global issues, entertainment and relaxation or refreshment, and self-branding through opening personal YouTube channel and becoming content creator.

#### **Student's perspectives on YouTube as a platform for learning journalism skills**

A handful of participants expressed positive thoughts towards YouTube as a platform that one can use for learning journalism skills. The platform is considered good for learning because of: -

##### **i. Learning/educational values**

Participants were of the opinions that as a communication platform, YouTube has become a platform where educational videos and tutorials provide training and learning through practices by following others. Also, it provides easy ways and step by step demonstrations to learn by viewing videos as compared to using other platforms such as Instagram. Therefore, viewers use this platform for procedural learning. As a result, participants claim that YouTube helps those wishing to learn different things such as tutorials on how to cook, how to design graphics, and how create different contents. The following are statements from research participants in both semi-structured and the distributed open-ended questions regarding educational values of YouTube:

*"I taught myself graphics designing through YouTube".* (Participant 1)

*"I think it is a good platform to use because you can search for answers and find them against journalism".* (Participant 2)

*"Many journalists open their channels in YouTube platform, so as a student of journalism it is easy for me to acquire knowledge from what I learned in class practically".* (Participant 3)

*"For me I think it's good idea YouTube to be one of platform for learning journalism skills (...) So, to learn journalism skills in YouTube is the good thing. For example, through YouTube you can get some different various skills concerning journalism because they are different people, experts, professional, who have different knowledge about journalism".* (Participant 4)

*"I think that YouTube is the platform that can help me to gain and learn journalism skills because on YouTube there are different broadcasting channels and expertise that provide journalism skills".* (Participant 5)

*"(...) using YouTube is proven effective educational tool because it has quick responses through videos to connect academics educators, researchers".* (Participant 6)

*"One can learn graphics designing which can be arts and creativity, and learning how to use tools for designing. I use YouTube to learn how other graphics designers use tools and designing techniques in designing programmes".* (Participant 7)

##### **ii. Variety of affordable and accessible educational contents**

In their positive thoughts' expressions, informants consider YouTube as a communication platform where learners can easily access affordable and wide range of video contents related to journalism from experts and professionals. Not only that, but they can also view and download videos for viewing later. In this, one participant said:

*"YouTube is a very good platform that may help anyone to learn about journalism as it comprises many journalists who post their interviews, documentaries, news etc."*

#### **4.4.3 Reasons for selecting YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills**

Participants from semi-structured interviews and other distributed open-ended questions had the following explanations on factors motivating them to use YouTube for learning journalism skills.

### **i. Affordability**

It was explained that YouTube is not an expensive platform to use for learning. It was noted, therefore, unlike on other websites where one has to buy educational tutorials, YouTube needs only internet access most of the times. For instance, two research participants from the open-ended questions said:

*"Because YouTube provides free sources of learning and users can create, share, and comment to develop their understanding about journalism skills".* (Participant 1)

*"I use YouTube for (learning) graphics because it is less expensive, it has many educational videos with good quality, and most content creators use YouTube instead of other platforms".* (Participant 2)

### **ii. Abundant learning materials**

Another reason motivating communication students to engage in YouTube-based learning for acquiring journalism skills has something to do with availability of journalism clear and straightforward learning resources. In both semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires, it was noted that YouTube has various learning materials in terms of videos, tutorials, lectures. The learning resources come from professional journalists, news media, other amateur contents creators. Moreover, the platform allows knowledge producers and consumers to form a community of interacting members. The learning materials are in the form of educational videos for learning things like designing graphics such as posters and learning how to use Adobe Photoshop as compared to other platforms.

In terms of abundance, it was also noted that YouTube does not have limitations in providing learning materials because when one views a particular video, then the platform provides options for more similar videos. Apart from abundance of educational videos, another observation was made on currency of the learning materials posted on YouTube. In this, it was realized that the platform provides various up-to-date learning resources. Furthermore, it seems that the much of learning materials on YouTube are suitable for practical sessions. This brings in the aspect of tutorials that facilitates procedural learning. In this observation, participants from both semi-structured interviews and the distributed open-ended questions said:

*"It has variety of sources or contents that I prefer to use."* (Participant 1)

*"The presence of top world media channel and their accurate news."* (Participant 2)

*"YouTube has many educators on the same topic, the site has many alternative videos to learn from on the same topic of journalism."* (Participant 3)

*"Many videos on YouTube are long and contain a lot of information about journalism skills compare to other platforms including Tik Tok which allow short videos with little information a thing that me prefer using YouTube."* (Participant 4)

*"In class I follow curriculum but our profession changes all the time, but YouTube has updated information, current videos, and new things."* (Participant 5)

*"It changes according to time hence it is up-to-date making it easier to stay in touch with new journalism techniques."* (Participant 6)

*"Practical application because YouTube offers practical tips and examples like media production".* (Participant 7)

### **iii. Popularity**

Another factor influencing informants to use YouTube for learning purposes is the popularity of the platform. Some findings reveal that YouTube is a popular and a widely used video sharing platform. This aspect seems to also have a positive influence on the way learners approach this platform from academic point of view. In other words, it has gained a good reputation and credibility in terms of its abilities to support learning among many learners and content creators. And, therefore, that makes it a trustworthy learning tool for many other students including participants in this study.

*“YouTube as a platform enables an individual to be able to write news, to publish news which might go viral and a help to get feedback.” (Participant 1)*

*“For me I think is globalization is the factor which motivates me to use YouTube as a platform of learning journalism skills. I choose YouTube because it is combining a lot of people who have different knowledge, materials about journalism skills.” (Participant 2)*

*“I use YouTube for (learning) graphics because (...) and most content creators use YouTube instead of other platforms.” (Participant 3)*

#### **iv. Convenience and flexibility**

It was also noted that YouTube is a convenient video sharing platform that learners can use for gaining knowledge about many things at their free time. Therefore, given its convenience and flexibility, YouTube saves time. Not only that, YouTube provides educational videos that cater for learners' preferred ways of learning. In their expressions, participants said:

*“YouTube offers flexibility in viewing videos for learning as compared to learning in classes or in discussions.” (Participant 1)*

*“I can find videos that align with my preferred way of learning, making it easier to understand and retain information.” (Participant 2)*

*“Because YouTube is flexible to access (educational) materials.” (Participant 3)*

#### **v. Easiness in learning**

Data from several informants explain that learners engage in YouTube-based learning because of clear and straightforward explanations. The audio-visual elements seem to be enjoyable and understandable through few explanations as compared to using other forms of learning materials such as books. Emphasizing on this learning easiness, participants noted:

*“Because it is audio-visual in nature, YouTube focuses on the specific topic that a person has selected to use and so it is topic-oriented platform.” (Participant 1)*

*“YouTube does not provide contents with many details like other platforms such as Facebook, it has straightforward explanations, unlike reading a book which is hard and not my personal interests, learning by viewing videos on YouTube is different because it is straightforward and easy to understand.” (Participant 2)*

*“Visual elements are better than texts on the book.” (Participant 3)*

*“It is easy to use YouTube, there is no need to learn how to use YouTube, anyone can use it as long as they have Gmail account.” (Participant 4)*

*“It is easy for learning because things are more clarified.” (Participant 5)*

*“I select YouTube for learning skills because it is visual, you can see in terms of actions where you can also remember easily rather than Googling and see words.” (Participant 6)*

Generally, data indicate that there are several factors that motivate research participants to engage in YouTube-based learning. These include Affordability, Abundant learning materials, and Popularity of the platform. Also, learners find YouTube to be a convenient and flexible platform, and there is an easiness in using it for learning journalism skills.

### **Contexts influencing the use of YouTube for learning journalism skills**

Apart from other factors, there are different contexts in which participants find themselves having to use YouTube for learning journalism skills, such contexts include the following: -

#### **i. A need for developing practical skills**

Informants noted that they find themselves having to use YouTube when they are in need of developing certain journalism practical skills. Therefore, in such situation YouTube becomes a valuable communication platform for learning practical skills that may not be heavily emphasized in classrooms. For example, some informants identified the need to learn skills like video editing and graphics. In this aspect, informants from both semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions said:

*"(...) certain journalism skills such as video editing, data visualization, or social media management are best learned through hands-on practice and observation of real-world workflows."* (Participant 1)

*"When I need to do something related to journalism."* (Participant 2)

*"I use YouTube when I need to learn through visual aid."* (Participant 3)

*"(I use YouTube) during video production and advertising."* (Participant 4)

#### **ii. A need for clarification and additional information**

Another situation when informants engage in YouTube-directed learning is when they are in need for more information or clarifications on certain journalism skills. It becomes a study session for broadening students' understanding about journalism and communication skills. Therefore, YouTube becomes a helpful communication platform for getting a better understanding of complex topics, clarifying information from other sources, or finding visual aids to enhance learning.

Moreover, other participants use the platform when there is inadequate knowledge from formal learning sessions. In addition, some informants engage in YouTube-based learning for skills verifying some information they are not sure of. The following are statements from research participants regarding the explained context:

*"For more clarification about a topic."* (Participant 1)

*"When I need access of visual aid."* (Participant 2)

*"When I do not get enough skills on television session, I realize that I need to learn journalism skills (on YouTube) in that situation."* (Participant 3)

*"In situations where I need more clarification about a given topic because YouTube contents go deeper by giving further clarification about a certain topic."* (Participant 4)

*"When you are alone and no one to ask, or when you are not sure of the information you have obtained from other sources."* (Participant 5)

*"When I need more information about certain issue, or when I do not understand the other things related to journalism."* (Participant 6)

#### **iii. Free time to learn**

It was also realized that some other participants engage in YouTube-based learning when they are free to do so. Therefore, YouTube becomes a go-to resource for students to study independently or seeking information outside of a classrooms' settings. Moreover, this aspect can also be associated with the learners' desire to engage in **timely learning**. YouTube, therefore, becomes useful when one needs to learn some journalism skills quickly. In this observation, different research participants said:

*"For me I prefer to use YouTube channel to learn journalism skills when I am free and also when I have got extra time."* (Participant 1)

*“When I find myself that I want to know about something in relations to journalism skills, YouTube become the first option.” (Participant 2)*

*“Mostly when I need to know something immediately.” (Participant 3)*

In general, there are various factors that influence research participants to use YouTube for learning various journalism skills. These include affordability of using it, abundant learning materials, and popularity of YouTube. Other factors include convenient and flexible learning as well as easiness in using YouTube for learning. Moreover, there are different circumstances in which informants find themselves having to engage in YouTube-based learning for acquiring journalism skills. These include a need for developing practical skills, a need for clarification and additional information, and free time to learn.

*Specific objective two: To determine kinds of journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students learn through YouTube as an interactive platform at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.*

### **Categories of educational YouTube videos**

There are different kinds of educational videos posted on YouTube, these can be in the form of demonstrations or tutorials, lectures, narrations. And so, this question intended to explore which kinds of journalism related education videos that research participants are interested most in watching for learning journalism skills. In general, data have revealed that majority of students prefer watching demonstrations or tutorials. However, there are others who go a mixed format of educational videos, for example, demonstrations and lectures, or documentary, tutorials and lecture. Also, one participant mentioned that they like documentaries which teach grammar, communication, persuasion, leading, and influencing others. In general, the following are categories of educational videos that participants prefer watching for learning journalism skills on YouTube: -

#### **a. Demonstration/tutorial educational videos**

The demonstration or tutorial educational videos are those how-to-videos that provide procedural learning. This implies that most participants prefer practical journalism to theoretical journalism. Data from semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires have revealed that in most instances, majority of participants like watching how-to-videos that demonstrate how to design graphics, and other few students focus on videos that demonstrate how-to-do production, photography, and content creation. In their explanations, participants different participants said:

*“Mostly are demonstration videos as I like to see much than hearing theories only.” (Participant 1)*

*“Demonstration videos because they explain how something works.” (Participant 2)*

*“I like observing other content creators in order to become a unique citizen journalist.” (Participant 3)*

*“The platform has how-to videos on designing 3D texts, objects, templates, invoices, using tools, mixing colours, measurements, and other paper works.” (Participant 4)*

*“I use YouTube to learn when I am stuck, and designing has no end.” (Participant 5)*

*“I watch those how-to videos on how to use camera, how to use programmes like Adobe Premier, and Adobe Photoshop, how to operate media equipment, how to do live broadcasting, how to design and set studio for good social appearance, how to set light, and how to project voice for each tone.” (Participant 6)*

*“In graphics designing, I learn photo editing, logo designing, motion graphics, movie editing, and newspaper production in Adobe InDesign.” (Participant 7)*

*“Most I prefer to view videos associated with giving education about how to create and use different tools that can help me to be a good journalist for example how to use camera, how to produce good videos, and how I can promote my (YouTube) channels.” (Participant 8)*

### b. Lectures

Apart from demonstration or tutorial educational videos, other participants added that they are interested in watching lectures as well. These lectures about journalism skills seem to be focused more on theoretical knowledge rather than practical aspects of journalism. Moreover, different research participants from the distributed open-ended questions said:

*“(I like) lectures that have been made on YouTube so as to learn more about something, for example, a journalist who wants to learn more about graphics design should search for lecture video on YouTube so as to get more knowledge.” (Participant 1)*

*“Mostly journalism skills are provided using lectures because everything is taught using videos and tutorials.” (Participant 2)*

*“Most I watch lectures, for example NBCU academy channel, and this is because most of videos contain well explanations and there are good skilled lecturers.” (Participant 3)*

The NBCU academy is YouTube channel dedicated to providing knowledge and skills about journalism, media, and technology. It is accessible on YouTube through <https://www.youtube.com/@NBCUAcademy>

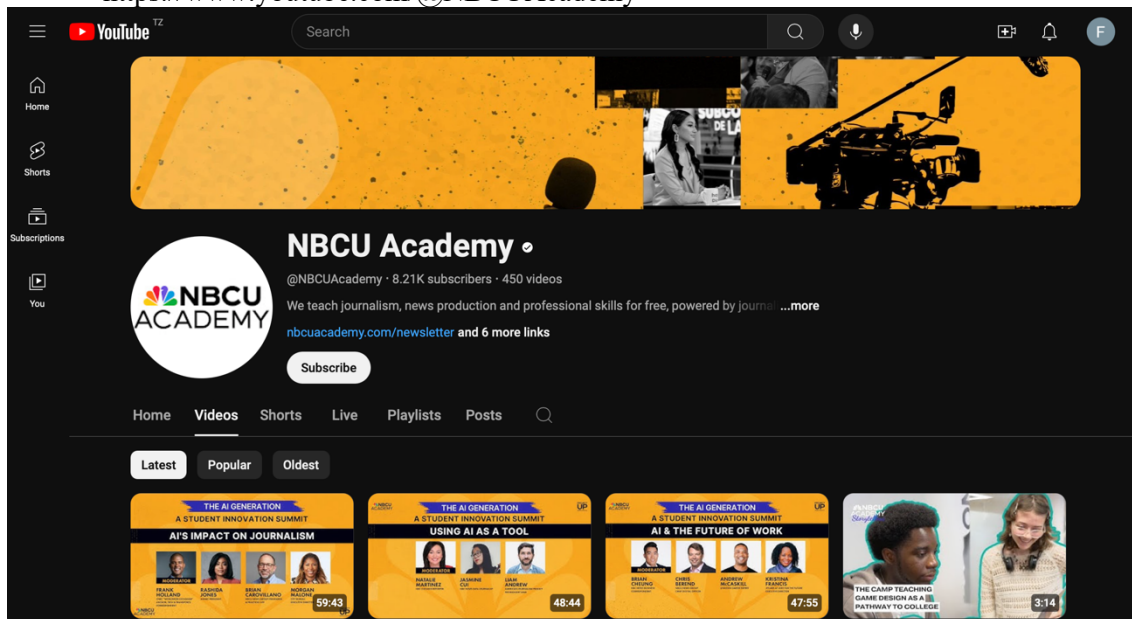


Figure 3: NBCU Academy

### c. Narrations

In addition to demonstrations and lectures, some participants said that they also watch educational videos that narrate different journalism aspects. This would imply that there are times when students prefer learning by listening to journalism narratives to practicing journalism itself. Sometimes students make follow up on narratives on reports that explain different events happening in different places. However, some informants reported that they watch not only narrations alone but with the mix of other educational videos formats. Overall, it appears that research participants engage in YouTube-based learning practices by watching educational videos that suit their learning needs. In most cases, as data reveal, there are those students who mostly prefer tutorials or educational videos that demonstrate how technical things like graphics designing, photography, and video production and editing work. There are others who prefer learning through lectures that teach different things about journalism. And, there are some few others who prefer watching educational videos that narrate different aspects related to

journalism. However, it was realized that there are those students who like learning by watching a mix of educational videos. The following statements from participants explain more about this observation:

*"Narration (...) because it is an easy way to learn."* (Participant 1)

*"Narrations because through that, it enables me to have wide understanding due to listening and watching."* (Participant 2)

*"On YouTube you may get several narrations (...) through this it may help the journalist to evaluate information, to criticize information and then come with the best view about the said narration."* (Participant 3)

*"The kind of videos which I prefer to use on YouTube to learning journalism skills is narrations and lectures. This is because they have given the room to understand very clearly and to get some different examples about journalism skills."* (Participant 4)

### **Journalism skills acquired through YouTube educational videos**

In this question, research participants mentioned different journalism related topics that are interested in learning through watching YouTube educational videos. Although there are different journalism skills, and most of informants focus on learning multiple journalism skills such as editing videos and sounds, graphics designing skills, photography, news reporting, newspaper writing skills, and movie making. In general, journalism skills that students prefer to learn can be put in the following categories: -

#### **a. Graphics designing**

As presented in the previous data, most of research participants seem to be more focused on using YouTube for learning graphics designing mostly by watching Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe InDesign and other editing apps tutorials. In this, students learn about photo editing, logo designing, adverts, motion graphics, and newspaper production using Adobe InDesign. Also, through tutorials, students learn about making publications such as flyers and brochures. For instance, some participants said:

*"I taught myself graphics designing through YouTube."* (Participant 1)

*"(I am interested in) learning techniques from other graphics designers to understand new tools in designing programmes, new versions of designing programmes."* (Participant 2)

*"Channels like 'The New York Times' and 'The Washington Post' have shared tutorials on incorporating various media elements, such as audio, video, and interactive graphics, into journalistic narratives."* (Participant 3)

Moreover, informants identified different YouTube channels that they like visiting for watching YouTube videos to learn graphics. These channels include different local and international content creators who provide tutorials on graphics designing. These include: -

##### **i. Richstar YouTube Channel**

Rich Star, a channel established and run by a young Tanzania who focuses on creative entrepreneurship, digital tutorials, educating and motivating creative people. It is accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@Richstartz>. By the time the channel was visited it had about 50.1K subscribers and 536 videos.

Moreover, using Swahili Language, his videos include designing graphics such as posters, magazines, and fliers by using Adobe programmes such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. He also teaches about photography, videos, and sounds production. In one of the videos, some viewers had the following positive comments:

*"Nakukubali sana mwalimu (I truly appreciate you tutor)."* (Viewer 1)

*"Hapa Rwanda tunafatilia sana masomo yako, asante sana kaka (We follow your tutorials here in Rwanda, thank you so much brother)."* (Viewer 2)

*"Umeeleweka kaka, hongera kwa maelezo mazuri (You are understood brother, thank you for clear explanations)."* (Viewer 3)

The following is the Richstar YouTube Channel page: -

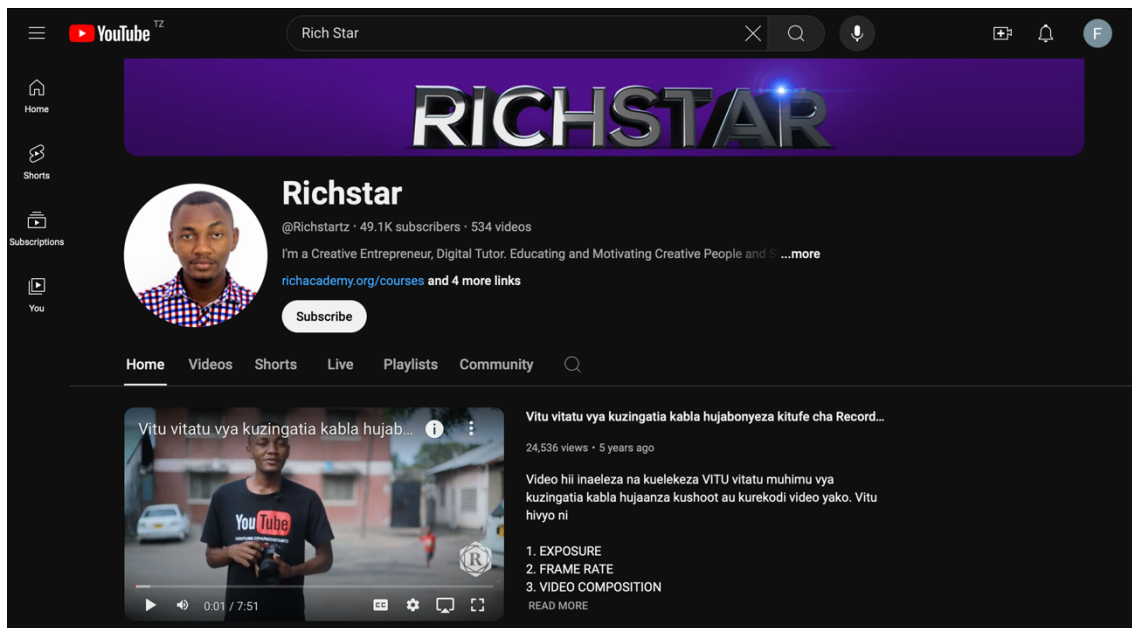


Figure 4: Richstar YouTube Channel

ii. Graphic Island

Like the Rich Star YouTube Channel, the Graphic Island YouTube channel focuses on providing tutorials on graphics designing. The host of this channel provides skills on using Microsoft Word, Coreldraw and Adobe programmes including Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator for creating such art works as logos, certificates, business cards, labels, it is accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@GRAPHICISLAND>. By the time the channel was visited it had about 350K subscribers and 588 videos.

In some of the videos, some viewers had the following mixed comments:

*"Wow, great tutorial, thank you sir, I am from Bangladesh."* (Viewer 1)

*"Thanx for sharing, very helpful."* (Viewer 2)

*"(...) these instructions are completely wrong (...)." (Viewer 3)*

*"I have learned something new from you and your videos because your video quality is too good. I hope it is very easy to understand for everyone."* (Viewer 4)

The following is the Graphic Island YouTube Channel page: -



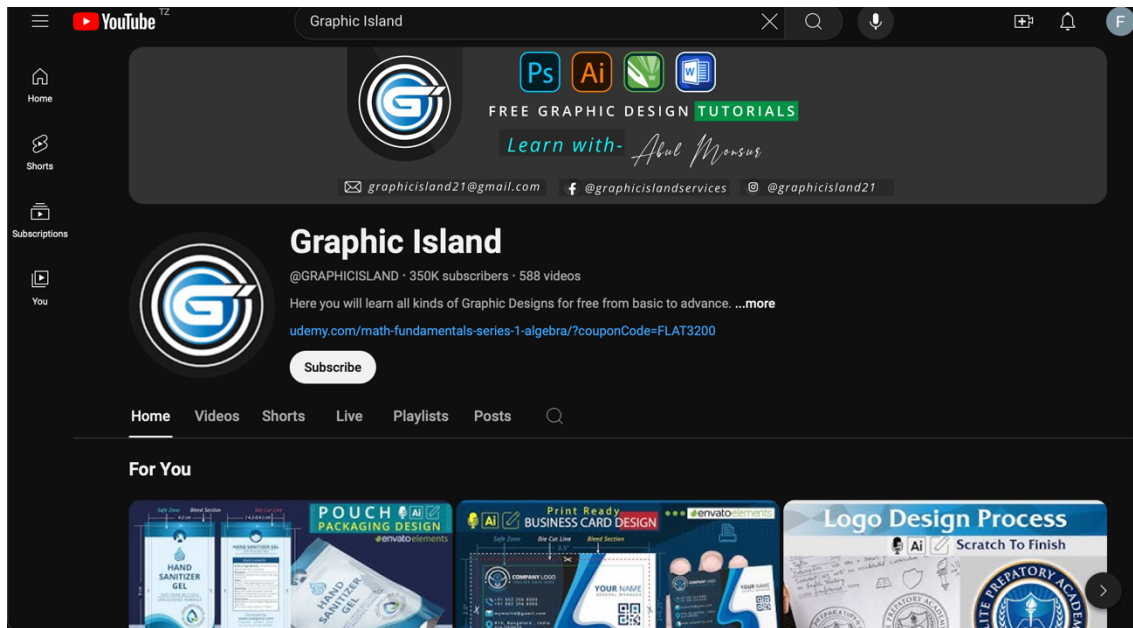


Figure 5: Graphic Island

### b. Photojournalism

Other journalism skills that participants learn through YouTube educational videos are related to photojournalism. This is about photography particularly on operating cameras and photo editing. For instance, some participants said:

*"The journalism skills which I am interested to learn on YouTube channel is photojournalism."*

(Participant 1)

*"To edit video and operate camera."* (Participant 2)

*"The journalism skills which I learn from YouTube is photojournalism and news writing."*

(Participant 3)

In terms of specific YouTube channel for learning photography, majority of research participants were not specific, however, some mentioned the Rich Star YouTube channel as the one they visit most for learning photography related skills. The following is one of the tutorial videos explaining about camera in photography: -

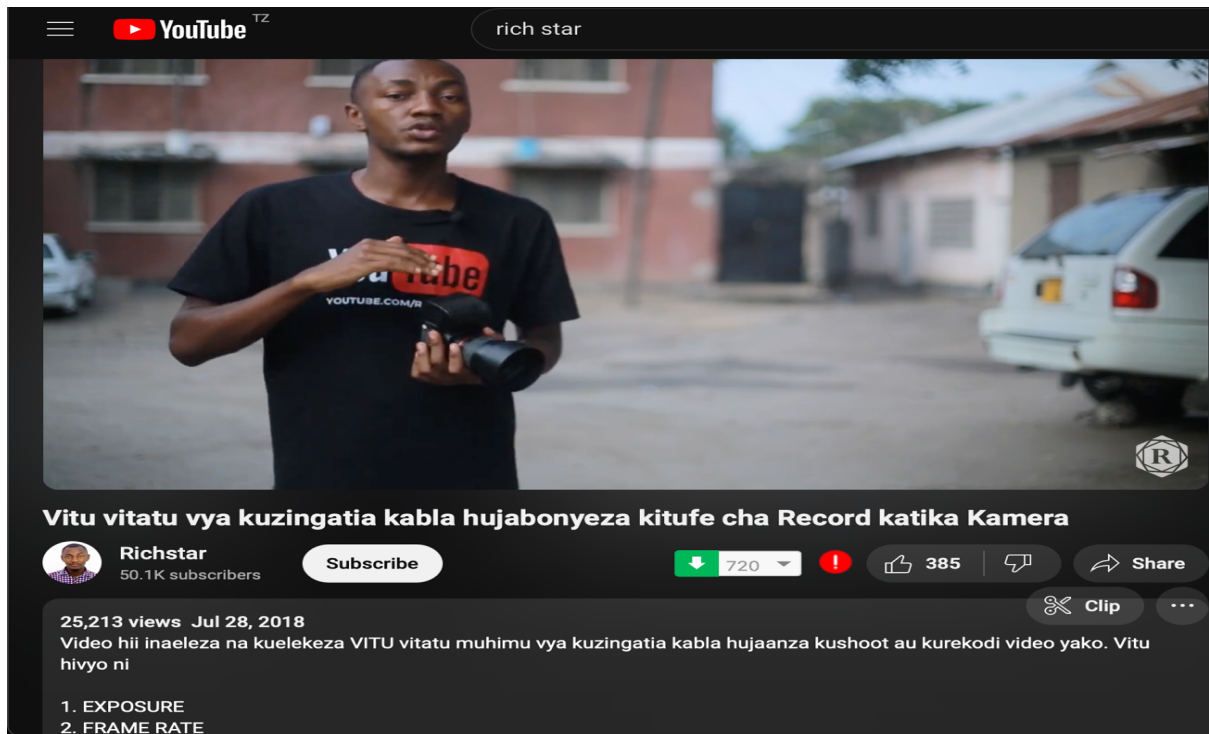


Figure 6: Rich Star video explaining about three things to consider (exposure, frame rate, and video composition) before taking a photo or shooting.

Based on the video, viewers had different comments including the following:

“Kaka nakupata vizuri sana, ishi milele (*I get you very well brother, long live*).” (Viewer 1)

“Mafunzo yako ni mazuri sana (*Your tutorials are very good*).” (Viewer 2)

“Duh, nimejifunza kitu (*I have learned something*).” (Viewer 3)

“Asante kwa somo zuri sana (*thank you for a very good lesson*).” (Viewer 4)

In another video, this content creator explains how a smartphone can be used as an alternative to the camera when it comes to shooting videos.

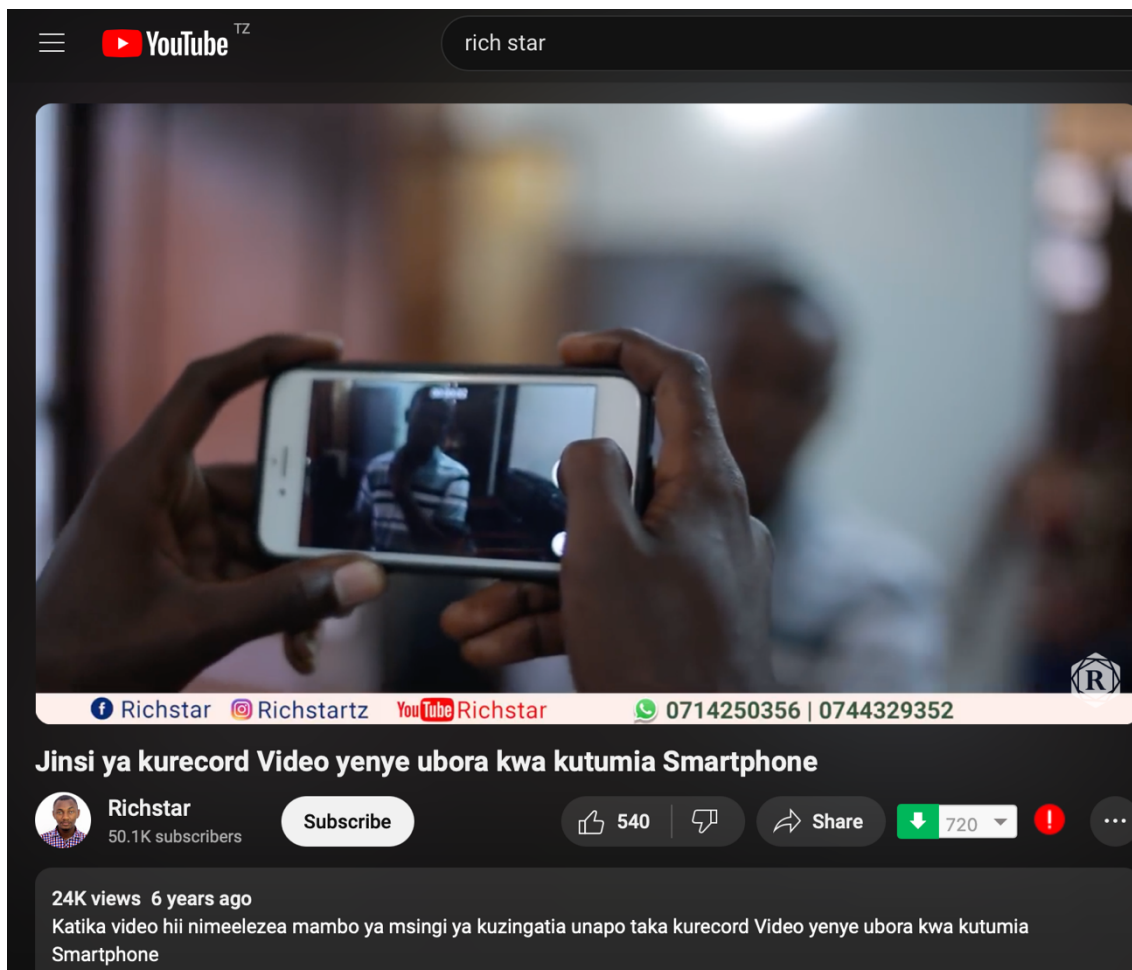


Figure 7: Rich Star tutorial teaching how one can shoot a quality video using a smartphone

### c. Television and Radio Contents Production

Another aspect of journalism skills that informants are interested in learning through YouTube educational tutorials is about producing television and radio contents. Moreover, other research participants reported that they learn about video editing, contents writing, scripts developing, to production and editing. Apart from that, this aspect includes learning how to prepare documentaries and multimedia storytelling programmes.

*"I like broadcast contents creation, for instance news."* (Participant 1)

*"In learning journalism skills, I like learning educational videos like TV production skills and radio production skills."* (Participant 2)

*"Production skills which include contents in Radio and Television broadcasting, script writing, editing, and distribution."* (Participant 3)

*"(I like learning about) video production which include video editing and audio editing, and learning what goes on behind the scenes."* (Participant 4)

*"Channels like The New York Times and The Washington Post have shared tutorials on incorporating various media elements, such as audio, video, and interactive graphics, into journalistic narratives."* (Participant 5)

*"(In) multimedia storytelling, there are a lot of great tutorials on YouTube covering different aspects of multimedia journalism, such as filming and editing video, creating effective data visualizations, and leveraging audio to enhance reporting. Expanding my skills in these areas would allow me to tell richer, more impactful stories."* (Participant 6)

#### **d. Writing newsworthy stories**

Ability to produce different newsworthy documents or publications is also another journalistic skill that students prefer learning through YouTube tutorials. Data show that informants learn about things related to writing news for magazine, writing feature stories, and preparing stories for documentaries and news reporting. They also learn about principles of good writing of news. In this, two informants reported:

*"I prefer learning about creating basic news contents and writing different stories."* (Participant 1)

*"Writing a press release which is an official document that is sent to the journalists, it can be information, statement, or announcement on current issue or event."* (Participant 2)

#### **e. Practicing Journalism**

Other research participants said that they engage in YouTube-based learning so as to understand how to put journalism into practices. In this aspect, students acquire presentation skills for news reporting, broadcasting live report and hosting events, news bulleting, and documentaries. The presentation skills include confidence, attractiveness, and public speaking by watching presenters from different YouTube media channels.

They also learn about how to communicate with different groups of people without creating classes among them, treatment of the stories, consideration of news values, and how to be good journalists. Other research participants reported that they learn how to conduct interviews with different people in broadcast programmes. In learning this skill, they also acquire interpersonal communication skills as well. For example, some participants said:

*"Presenting the message in front of the class is not something easy but through videos on YouTube I am capable of knowing things to consider in the presentation."* (Participant 1)

*"Public speaking is among of journalism skills I am interested in learning from YouTube, for example how to overcome the communication anxiety."* (Participant 2)

*"(I learn about) interviewing and interpersonal (communication) skills by watching video interviews conducted by journalists on channels like PBS, NewsHour, and BBC News. This has helped me analyze effective questioning techniques, active listening strategies, and ways to establish rapport with interview subjects."* (Participant 3)

*"(In) interviewing skills, I learned a lot on how I can interview a person as a journalist in a good way from the beginning to the end."* (Participant 4)

There are different YouTube channels that participants prefer to visit for learning general skills on journalism practices. These include university educational channels including NBCU Academy accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@NBCUAcademy> and UC Berkeley accessed through <http://www.youtube.com/@ucbjschool> due to their rich in journalism contents. For instance, one participant said:

*"UC Berkeley Graduate School of journalism and NBCU academy channels have a lot of videos about journalism, also they provide a lot of information on their videos."* (Participant 1)

A content review from the NBCU Academy YouTube channel, for example, shows that there are numerous videos that provide journalism skills based on how to report breaking news, investigative journalism, journalism practices in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), how to conduct interviews, how to become legal journalists and covering court proceedings, how to find news stories, and online news. Other videos focus on how to use teleprompter, reporting health news, and the art of podcast storytelling.

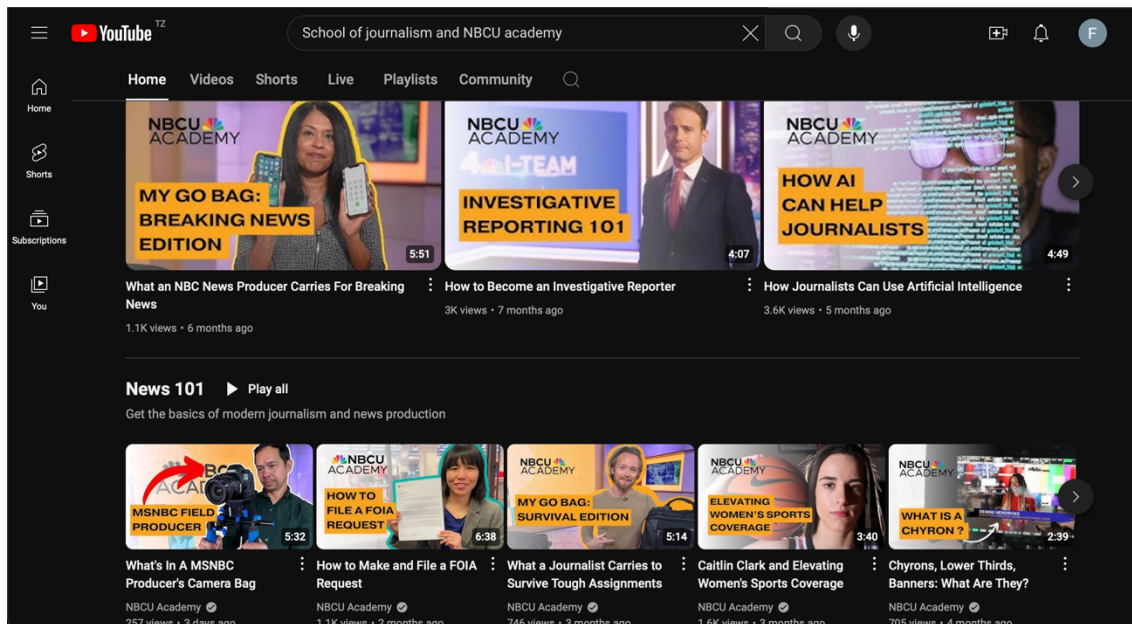


Figure 8: NBCU Academy YouTube Channel

Apart from NBCU Academy tutorial videos, the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism also provides different tutorials that provides education on various journalism skills. For example, there are educational discussions, lecture series, and presentations on topics like fighting the disinformation, investigative reporting.

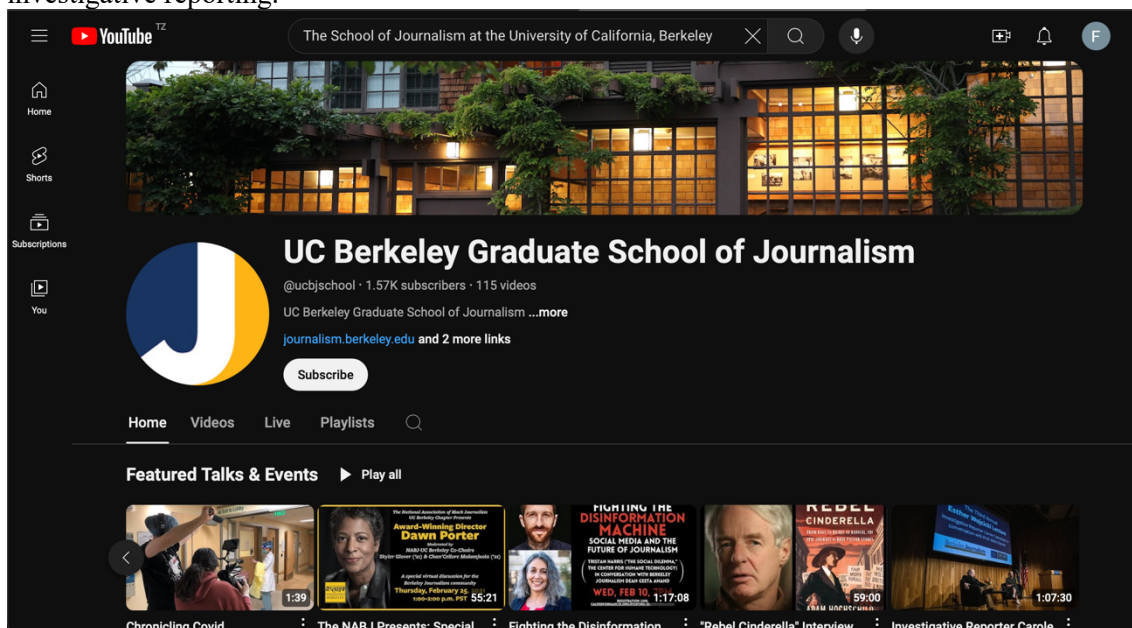


Figure 9: UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism YouTube Channel

Other YouTube channels well established news media. These channels provide different news stories and documentaries. Participants learn presentation skills from these YouTube channels because the channels are considered credible and reliable sources of news stories and documentaries. These channels are both local and international including

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC Swahili) accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@BBCNewsSwahili>, Independent Television (ITV) in Tanzania accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@ITVTanzaniaTz>, Azam TV accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@azamtvz>, Al Jazeera accessed through <http://www.youtube.com/@aljazeeraenglish>, and the Public Broadcasting Service accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@PBS>.



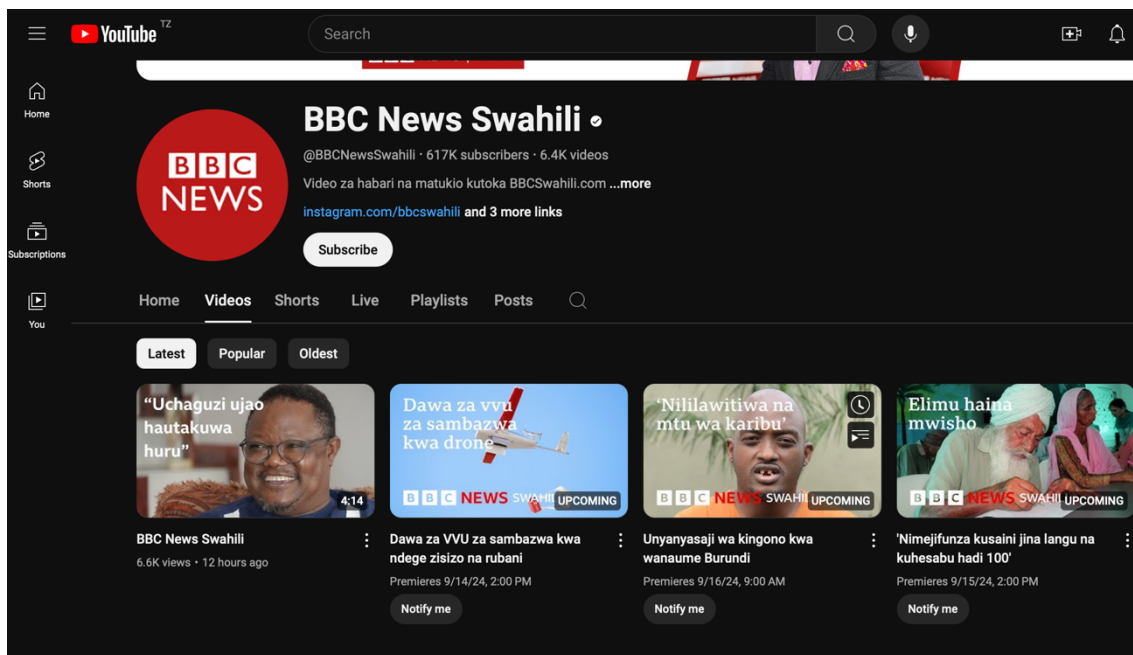


Figure 10: BBC Swahili YouTube Channel

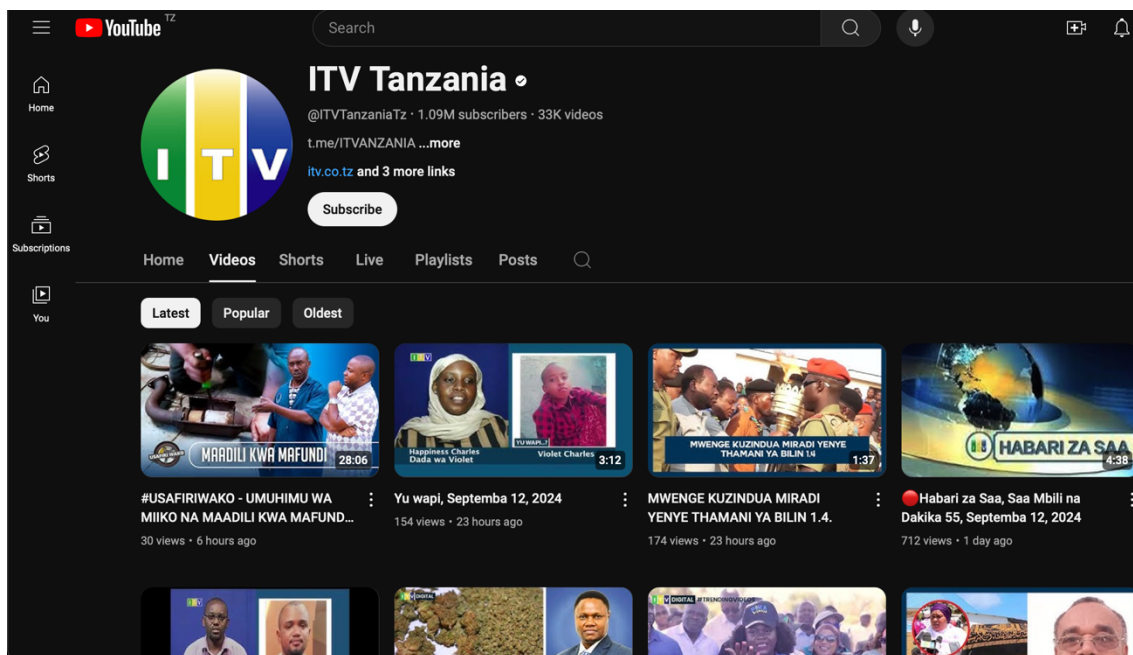


Figure 11: ITV Tanzania YouTube Channel

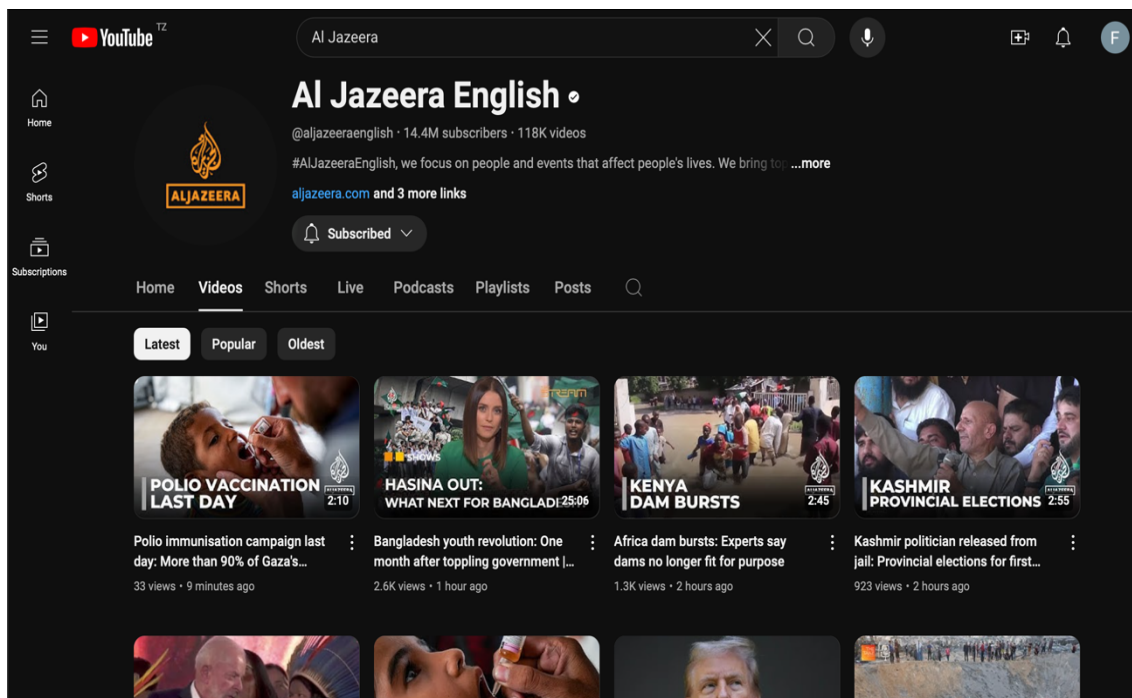


Figure 12: Al Jazeera English YouTube Channel

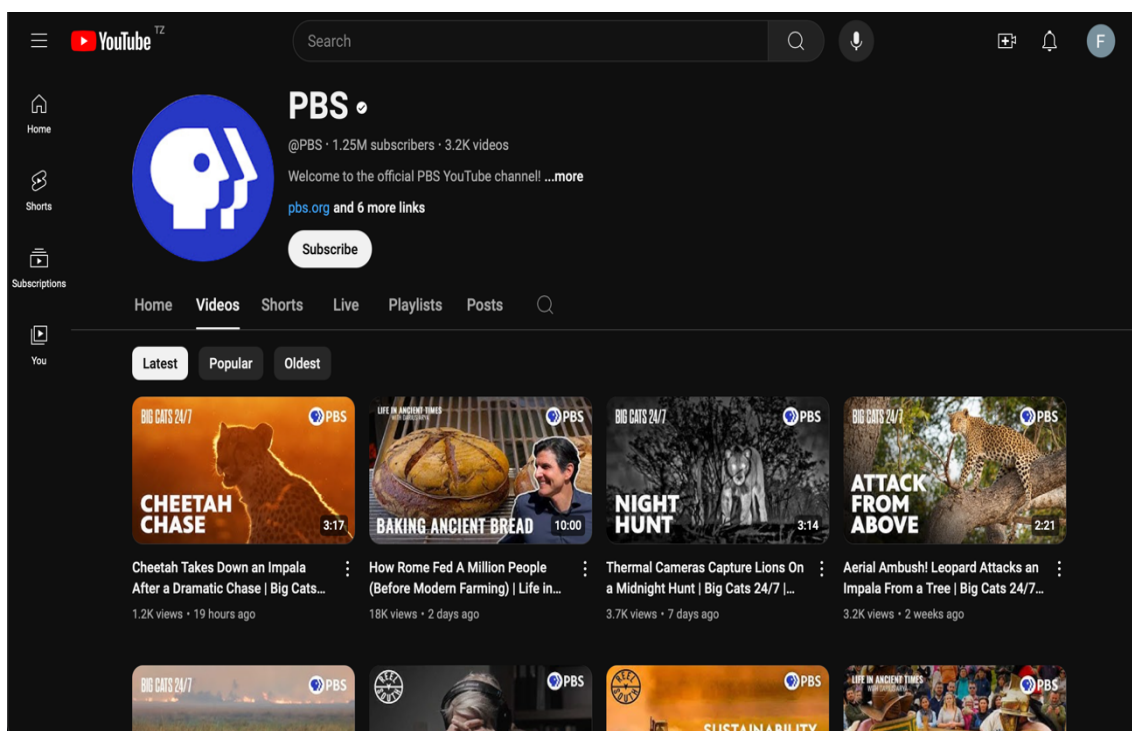


Figure 13: PBS YouTube Channel

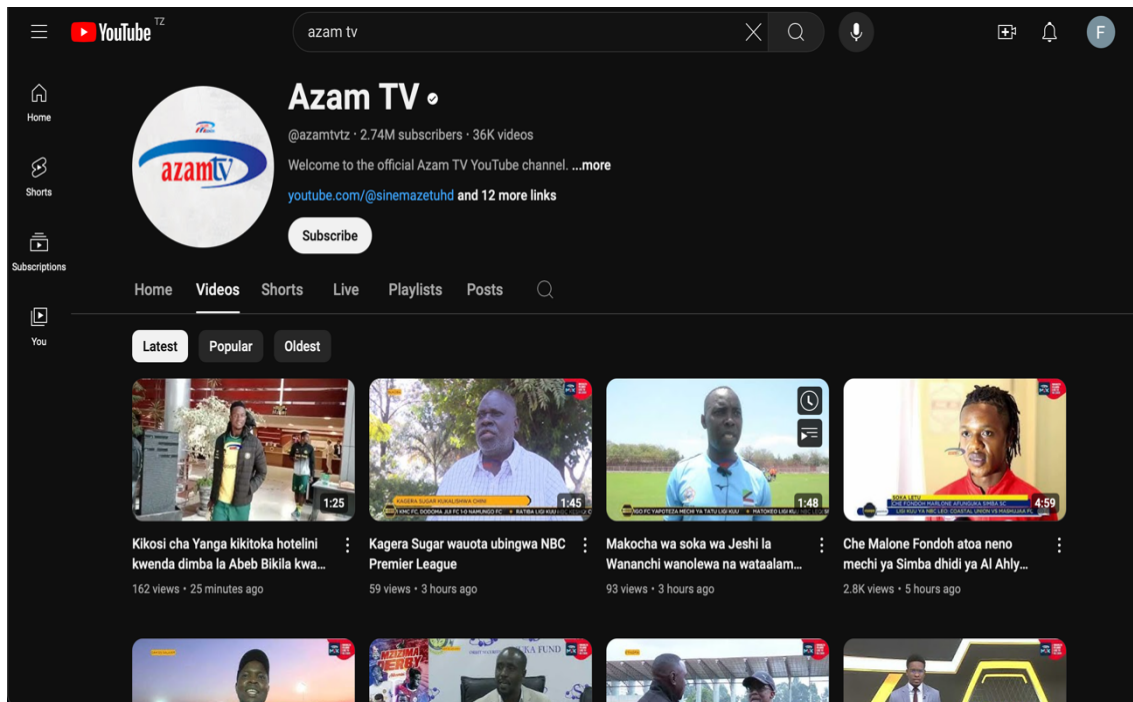


Figure 14: Azam TV YouTube Channel

Moreover, some participants prefer learning from YouTube channels including Ayo TV accessed through <https://www.youtube.com/@millardayoTZA>, Bongo Five accessed through <http://www.youtube.com/bongofive>, and SAUT Digital accessed through <http://www.youtube.com/sautdigital1962> because these have young presenters.

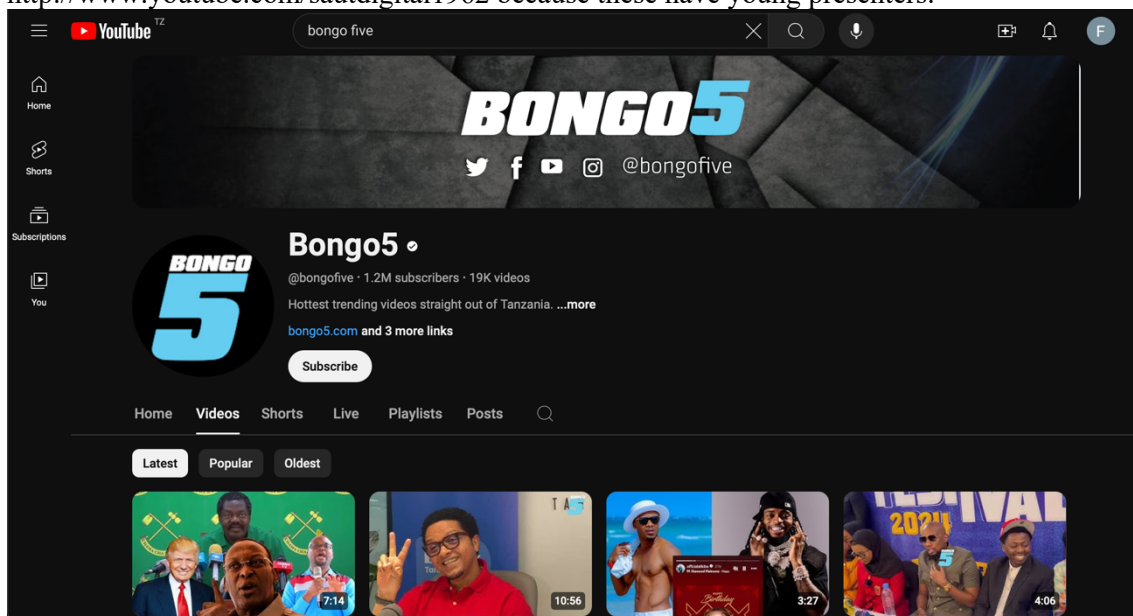


Figure 15: Bongo5 YouTube Channel



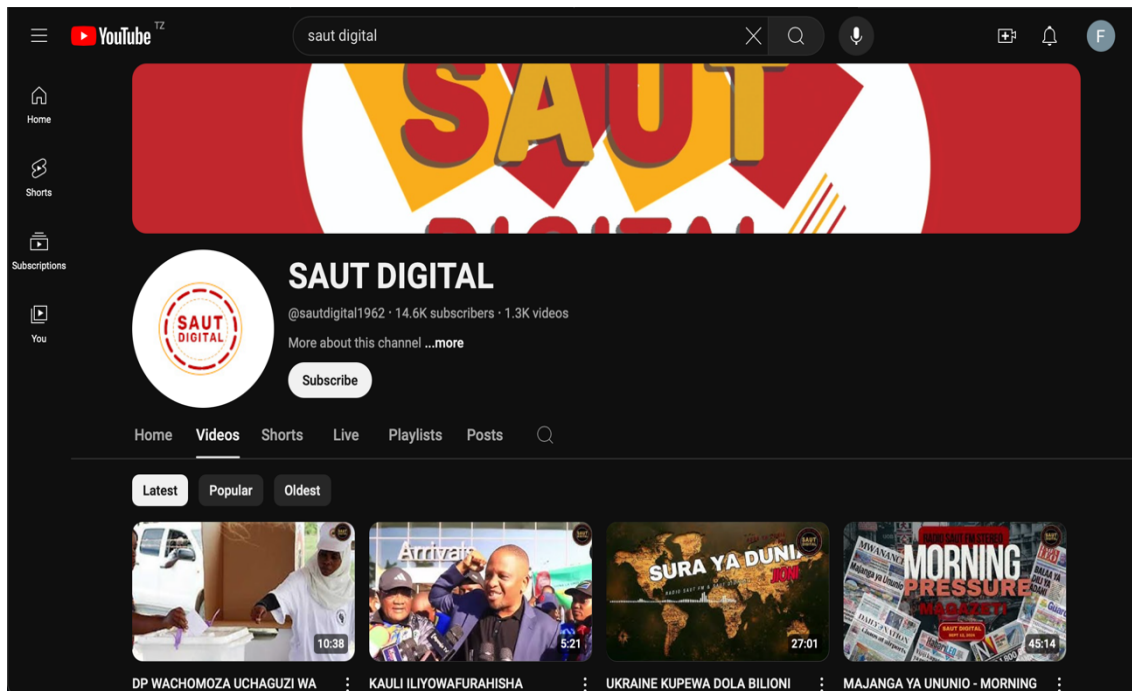


Figure 16: SAUT Digital YouTube Channel

**Overall, data indicate that research participants engage in YouTube-based learning for acquiring different journalism skills. Most of the skills appear to relate with practicality of the discipline itself. These include learning how to design graphics through different programmes especially Adobe, producing contents for television and radio broadcasts, photojournalism, and writing newsworthy and feature stories. Other skills are based on journalism in practice particularly the news presentation skills as well as interviewing skills.**

Moreover, there are different YouTube channels that research participants prefer watching for learning journalism skills. **These include university educational channels including NBCU Academy and UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, established news media.** These channels provide different news stories and documentaries, they include British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC Swahili), Independent Television (ITV) in Tanzania, Al Jazeera, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), Ayo TV, Bongo Five, and SAUT Digital. Also, there are other channels which are run by individual content creators or YouTubers.

#### 4.4.7 Determinants of good YouTube educational videos

To understand whether some videos have educational values or not in terms of journalism skills, research participants reported that they consider the following factors: -

##### i. Video technicalities

Video technicalities include graphics display, video size, audio-visual quality, and contents arrangements. When considering graphics display, research participants explained that they focus on the arrangements and display of the video contents. This observation implies that good or attractive graphics represent valuable information or educational materials that one could learn something from.

*“Checking the display quality of the graphics and arrangements of the contents before opening the videos.” (Participant 1)*

*“I consider attractiveness of the videos in terms of attractive display pictures or covers”. “I also check the video size, sounds, language, clarity and resolution of which good quality is considered to start from 720p.” (Participant 2)*

*“Firstly, arrangement of teaching lectures, communication used, credibility, and topic that is being presented.” (Participant 3)*

##### ii. Video Contents

Another factor that learners consider is based on the video contents. In this, general explanations from the research participants indicate that they focus on such aspects as relevance of the video contents, accuracy of video contents, ethical contents, timely contents, language used in delivering the contents, and credibility of the presenters of the video contents.

In terms of video contents relevance, some participants intend to determine first whether the posted YouTube video aligns with what they intend to learn from it. Furthermore, it was realized that contents relevance is determined by the topic or theme, learning objectives, and presentation of the topic that one wants to learn about from a particular video. Although specific news criteria were not specifically identified and explained, it was found that some informants link the video contents with the news criteria.

Apart from ethical considerations, other informants focus on how current a particular educational video is. In other words, before watching a video, one checks the time when that particular video was uploaded. This implies the most recent videos may be of good and current educational information. Moreover, it was realized that some learners tend to pay attention to contents presented by those whom they consider to be credible YouTubers/content creators. Although specific aspects of credibility were not clearly explained, it appears that informants are well informed of which sources of knowledge and skills are suitable for them. In general, different participants said:

*"Content is the vital issue when it comes on determination of suitable video on YouTube."* (Participant 1)

*"I preview a video before watching the rest of it to check whether it relates with what I want to learn, this includes making a follow up or general overview of video first to see whether it contains contents that I need."* (Participant 2)

*"Checking the headline determines what I can learn, previewing the video from introduction and skipping to the end."* (Participant 3)

*"The factors that I consider is good selection of my topic, good flow of narration of the topic that is being selected, the privacy of other YouTube users, and also adhering to the terms and conditions of YouTube."* (Participant 4)

*"I determine good educational videos that are suitable for me to learn journalism skills on YouTube by watching and listening to the contents that are being conveyed."* (Participant 5)

*"I consider things like language, the dress code, videos with ethics, values, truth."* (Participant 6)

*"Language specifications is the one of the factors which I consider when I select videos about journalism skills."* (Participant 7)

*"I can determine them by considering the person speaking or in a video, language used, and quality."* (Participant 8)

*"(...) the most important consideration is ensuring the content comes from reputable, credible sources. I look for videos produced by well-established journalism organizations, educational institutions, or recognized industry experts."* (Participant 9)

### **iii. Number of views**

Some research participants claimed that before watching any videos for learning journalism skills they consider how many viewers have watched it. The assumption here is that the number of views determines the educational value that a particular video has or relates to journalism skills that one is looking for. And that implies a handful numbers of learners have gained some journalism skills from it, and that attracts other learners, too. Explaining more about this observation, three participants said:

*"Number of views on a particular video demonstrates that techniques are common."* (Participant 1)

*"I search on the person I know or sometimes I watch the video due to number of viewers subscribers."* (Participant 2)

*"By considering viewers and reviews and comments."* (Participant 3)

#### **iv. Number of subscribers**

Similar to considering the number of views on a particular educational video, some other learners consider the number of subscribers of a particular YouTube channel that provides educational videos. Therefore, the main assumption here is that the more a particular YouTube channel gets subscribed, the more other learners maybe trusting it to be a credible channel for learning certain journalism skills. However, that may not be that case because there not seem to be an optimum number of subscribers to verify the credibility or educational values of the hosted YouTube videos on journalism skills. Three participants said:

*"(I do that by) subscribing to good channels for further references, and checking the number of subscribers."* (Participant 1)

*"I search on the person I know or sometimes I watch the video due to number of viewers subscribers."* (Participant 2)

*"I do not consider likes or subscriptions because other channels maybe small but good".* (Participant 3)

#### **v. Verified YouTubers/credible YouTube accounts**

Another factor that informs some learners on the validity of educational videos posted on YouTube by checking whether an account has been verified. The verified account could indicate that the YouTube channel is hosts educational videos from a credible source of knowledge. Other informants explained this aspect in terms of popularity of the YouTube channel itself. In this, therefore, journalism skills come from YouTube channels run by prominent people and media organizations. Moreover, another informant emphasized on considering content credibility and expertise as the most important consideration in ensuring the content comes from reputable, and credible sources. The following are few statements captured from research participants about this experience:

*"I search on the person I know (...)." (Participant 1)*

*"By following valid accounts."* (Participant 2)

*"I consider credibility of the contents creator (...)." (Participant 3)*

*"I consider biography to determine whether the presenter is an expert or professional."* (Participant 4)

*"I look for videos produced by well-established journalism organizations, educational institutions, or recognized industry experts."* (Participant 5)

#### **vi. Comments and reactions**

Other determinants of good educational videos are about comments and reactions of the previous viewers. Some research participants observed that before watching certain YouTube videos to learn journalism skill, they check reactions including 'likes' and 'dislikes', and read comments that other viewers have shared about a particular video. This means that videos with many bad comments and dislikes could be considered as not good ones for learners. In that case, videos with good comments and many likes are likely to be selected by many students. One informant noted:

*"(...) likes and dislikes even for the creators that I am not familiar with."* (Participant 1)

#### **vii. Others' recommendations**

Apart from other factors, it was realized that there are those research participants who consider recommendations from other video viewers. This implies that referring to others' recommendations enables learners to easily search for and identify useful educational channels and videos that are readily available for them. Moreover, it saves time for learners who do not yet know how and where to start searching for journalism learning materials. Emphasizing on this observation, one informant noted:

*"Before watching videos on YouTube, I contact others or friends to know which good channel to watch."* (Participant 1)

In general, data have revealed that there are different aspects that research participants consider when selecting YouTube educational videos, or YouTube channels for learning journalism skills. These factors are vital in determining what videos to watch and what videos not to watch for learning journalism skills. These factors, as explained by research participants, include graphics display, video contents, number of views, and number of subscribers. Other determinants include verified YouTubers/credible accounts, comments and reactions of the previous viewers, and other viewers' recommendations.

#### **4.4.8 Self-directed learning process for acquiring journalism skills**

Despite being an informal learning, it was realized that in learning journalism skills, research participants follow logical steps. These steps can be categorized in terms of before, during, and after. As one participant noted:

*"Before watching videos, first I set my goals on which topic I need to watch on YouTube, then after that I prepare my notebook so as to take note during lecture, then during learning journalism skills, I always take notes and mark the main point with red pen so as to differentiate point with explanations, and at last after learning journalism skills I make practice on what I have learned when I am in practical session such as when I am in radio session."* (Participant 1)

The steps, therefore, include: -

##### **i. Deciding what to learn/choosing a topic**

It was realized that before viewing any educational videos for learning journalism skills, students identify the themes or topics, that is, choosing particular journalism skills that they want to learn. Choosing a particular topic to learn about is considered important in the sense that it helps students to determine the kinds of journalism skills they want learn, and the specific or suitable YouTube channels or videos to select. Some research participants said:

*"Before going to watch YouTube video tutorials, normally there is always a skill I want to learn so I learn by watching and practicing."* (Participant 1)

*"Before learning journalism skills I actually prepare what I need to learn."* (Participant 2)

*"I outline what I want to learn from the video especially when learning some design for the first time."* (Participant 3)

*"First, I do not go without a plan, knowing what to do, considering the idea I have, YouTube becomes additional."* (Participant 4)

*"First thing is to provide the topic which I want to learn also to listen carefully the specific topic also to take note and last to revised what learning about."* (Participant 5)

##### **ii. Setting learning objectives**

Having decided kinds of journalism skills they want to learn from the videos, the second step is about setting learning objectives. The learning objectives help students determine what to watch and expect to learn from the contents in the tutorials. However, one informant argued that this may not always be the case because there are times, without having any learning objectives, one accidentally watches videos especially when there is a sudden internet access. Three participants said:

*"I always set goals before watching any video, for example, before watching I always analyse why should I watch it (...)." (Participant 1)*

*"Before watching videos first I setting my goals on which topic I need to watch on YouTube (...)." (Participant 2)*

*"Before I was not guiding myself because of lack goals, so I was watching everything that was coming, this time I decided to set goals. For instance, if I visit YouTube there must a real reason (...)." (Participant 3)*

### **iii. Preparing conducive environment**

Next to setting learning objectives is about preparing conducive environment for students to view YouTube videos for learning. This step involves finding a cool, quiet, or isolated place where there are no obstacles or noises. The place can be one's own room. In addition, other participants associated conducive environment with ensuring that the learner is psychologically well to ensure that one focuses on learning and paying attention to the videos that one is watching.

*"Before getting to learn journalism skills I just find a good place that will make me concentrate on what I want to learn, and during the learning process I just pay attention and avoid different any disturbances (...)." (Participant 1)*

*"Before I start using You Tube for learning journalism skills, I make sure I switch my phone into 'Do not Disturb', during the use I make sure I focus on the content and lastly after there, is to practice what I learned." (Participant 2)*

### **iv. Preparing resources**

Depending on what one wants to learn, some research participants identified an aspect of different resources necessary for facilitating the learning process. These resources include necessary tools such as camera for doing practice and time to watch the videos. Explaining more about this, one informant said:

*"Firstly, I make sure that I have enough time to watch those videos, having enough resources like internet bundle (...)." (Participant 1)*

### **v. Learning while practicing.**

In this stage, apart from learning other journalism skills that are not practical oriented, it was realized most of research participants engage in procedural learning by watching what is demonstrated on YouTube videos. This observation indicates that YouTube is, in most cases, a platform that supports practical learning of journalism skills. The learning process, therefore, involves several key aspects particularly being mindful, listening, watching, taking notes, and engaging in actual practice at same time.

On the aspect of mindfulness, learners ensure that they have discipline on what they learn and focus on active listening to what is presented in the videos. Moreover, the whole process involves learning while practicing, but sometimes learning first and then practicing later. This is important in order to check whether one can practice what one has learned. This is about viewing, practicing, and repeating viewing. In addition to this observation, another informant noted that during the learning process, they also consider the video length, language, and video quality. Different participants said:

*"Before I start to watch video I prepare my mind for study, then I start watching the video, and then after finishing I summarize and practice things or topic that has been presented so as to become better a journalist." (Participant 1)*

*"Concentrating, watching, and rewinding videos particularly when I do not understand what I am watching." (Participant 2)*

*"Listening, taking notes, and actual practice at same time." (Participant 3)*

*"When I do not have time, I save (the video) on the watchlist or download it (to watch it later)." (Participant 4)*

### **vi. Assessment**

Having watched the videos and learned journalism skills, informants noted that they evaluate themselves. This step is done so that learners know whether they have understood the lesson particularly for procedural learning. In doing so, they meditate or recalls what they have watched, comparing practices with what has been learned and the goals set. In this observation, different participants said:

*"(I) demonstrate and practice skills I learnt from different tutorial videos."* (Participant 1)

*"Practicing what I learned."* (Participant 2)

*"After learning, I usually rate the video channel and use the knowledge I got in my studies or required field."* (Participant 3)

*"Before getting to learn journalism skills I just find a good place that will make me concentrate on what I want to learn, and during the learning process I just pay attention and avoid different any disturbances, and after learning I just try and practice what I have learned from the video I watched."* (Participant 4)

In general, despite using YouTube as part of their informal learning practices, data have indicated that there is a particular process that majority of the research participants follow when learning journalism skills through YouTube videos. This process, therefore, involves deciding what to learn/choosing a topic, setting learning objectives, preparing conducive environment, and preparing resources. Then, students learn while practicing and assess themselves to find out whether they can practice the journalism skills they have acquired from watching YouTube videos.

*Specific research objective three: To examine how YouTube-based learning compliments journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students acquire in formal class sessions at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.*

### **Values of YouTube in formal journalism education**

This theme intended to explore how YouTube has become an additional communication platform where communication students can journalism compensate knowledge and skills that is inadequately provided in formal learning sessions. General data suggest that, the platform complements formal learning by providing the following: -

#### **i. Procedural/practical journalism skills learning**

The majority of the research participants consider YouTube to be 'a practical session platform'. On YouTube research participants can find videos that demonstrate how journalism skills are applied in real-world scenarios. The demonstrations, therefore, help students to understand journalism topics in details. This can be a valuable complement to theoretical learning in class. This is because practical sessions seem limited in formal classes, and therefore YouTube provides demonstrations of different journalism skills whose theoretical bases have been taught in formal classes. Those demonstrations help learners to see how journalism is practiced in reality as well. Moreover, what students learn in formal class sessions may not be enough. For instance, different participants said:

*"It gives me real life examples of how I should do my journalism career."* (Participant 1)

*"YouTube adds value in my learning because it contains different types of journalism practices like television shows, sessions which I am not learning in practice during classes."* (Participant 2)

*"Classrooms offer theories most of the time, but most of what I learn on YouTube is more practical."* (Participant 3)

*"I am told to go and watch YouTube videos; teacher encourages me to view YouTube videos (because) additional skills and knowledge is offered on YouTube."* (Participant 4)

*"It nourishes my practical skills such as photography and video editing."* (Participant 5)

*"(...) Formal journalism education often focuses on foundational principles and established best practices (...) While formal classes provide a strong theoretical foundation, YouTube videos can offer hands-on, practical demonstrations of journalistic skills."* (Participant 6)

## ii. **Diverse and timely journalism skills**

It was explained that YouTube is an interactive platform that adds value to students' learning activities through providing diverse and current journalism contents. It allows students to remain updated on current journalism skills which may not be immediately covered in formal education. That is to say, the platform provides extra learning materials to what has been taught in class. Moreover, it was also noted that YouTube has plenty of learning materials and various experts that can help learners know more about different journalism skills. Also, after learning one maybe in a good position to practice well in formal classes. The learning materials include videos that demonstrate and shows journalism practices. Three participants said:

*"(on YouTube) you learn more than explanations."* (Participant 1)

*"It adds value in such a way that you get the demonstrations from various presenters."*  
(Participant 2)

*"Watching educational video on YouTube adds value mostly in increasing knowledge that have being taught in formal classes."* (Participant 3)

## iii. **Flexible and self-guided learning**

YouTube compliments formal learning by providing learners with autonomy to organize learning sessions on their own. **Therefore, overall findings indicate that** YouTube can be a valuable tool that compliments and thus enhances formal journalism education. This is because, as research participants noted, it facilitates procedural/practical journalism skills learning, provides diverse and timely journalism skills, and enhances flexible and self-guided learning. One participant said:

*"(...) Classroom instruction is typically bound by fixed schedules and curricula. YouTube, on the other hand, offers the flexibility to explore topics and skills at my own pace, revisiting content as needed and focusing on areas of personal interest or weakness."* (Participant 1)

### **4.4.10 Students' experiences in using YouTube for learning journalism skills**

In this question, the majority of research participants noted that they have had a good experience in using YouTube for learning journalism skills. In general, their good experience in using this platform is mainly due to its: -

#### i. **Accessibility and convenience**

Informants consider YouTube an accessible and convenient platform that they can use at any time to learn journalism skills of their interests. This implies that one can access and learn any journalism skills through YouTube at their own free time. This phenomenon, therefore, makes learners have an enjoyable experience in engaging in YouTube-based learning. In explaining this aspect, two participants noted:

*"The sheer volume of high-quality, freely available content on YouTube has made it incredibly accessible and convenient for me to explore journalism-related topics and skill-building at my own pace."* (Participant 1)

*"People do not see it as a classroom, but it is a classroom where you get plenty of learning materials."* (Participant 2)

#### ii. **Journalism knowledge acquisition and skills development**

It was also realized that the good experience that research participants have about YouTube-based learning is due to its ability to help them develop and improve different practical journalism skills. Moreover, YouTube has given informants opportunities to acquire more knowledge about different topics and issues of their interests. In connection to this observation, it was noted that YouTube has been a good platform for learning with more profits as compared to other platforms like Pininterest. In addition, it was noted that the platform provides options for saving and downloading (videos) instead of buying them. The following were statements captured from different participants regarding this experience:

*"The general experience of using YouTube is good and I have learnt a lot of things from YouTube."* (Participant 1)

*"In general YouTube platform has helped me to be equipped with creating and writing different news and stories that in turn helps me share news in different social media such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook accounts."* (Participant 2)

*"It is good on academic context because I have got different skills of journalism from watching video on YouTube, it helps me to understand the way of communicating with the audience, how to respond to audience, and to ask questions as a presenter."* (Participant 3)

*"As a student who learn journalism, I have a lot of good experiences like writing my own blog, creating my videos on online and submitting them on some websites, but also I write articles."* (Participant 4)

*"YouTube has been a helpful platform since it solves problems through knowledge about media, graphics designing, and technology."* (Participant 5)

*"YouTube channel helps to understand various things more than what I learn in my class."* (Participant 6)

*"The platform has given me knowledge and skills of designing and so I get money by selling art works/graphics."* (Participant 7)

*"It has more options including abundant educational videos, almost everything can be found on YouTube."* (Participant 8)

### iii. **Enjoyment**

Other research participants expressed a sense of enjoyment after having engaged themselves in YouTube-based learning. In this, data have revealed that YouTube-based learning is a form of leisure process of knowledge and skills acquisition. Therefore, based on general observations, YouTube-based learning has been a good experience to the majority of the research participants. The platform has become a valuable and convenient communication platform for supplementing journalism formal education. It is a platform for **journalism knowledge acquisition and skills development**. It provides accessibility to variety of journalism contents and skills, and thus encourages students to engage in informal learning at their own pace. And, thus, learners enjoy using YouTube for acquiring journalism skills. For instance, one participant said:

*"YouTube is enjoyable when videos are good, there is entertainment, I have enjoyed using the platform for learning."* (Participant 1)

#### 4.4.11 YouTube as an interactive education platform

As part of understanding participants' experiences from engaging themselves in YouTube-based learning, and given the observation that YouTube is also considered a social medium which can connect contents creators and contents consumers, this question intended to examine how contents creators and contents consumers interact and connect on YouTube. In general, the interaction takes place in the following ways: -

##### i. **Viewers' reactions (comments, likes, and dislikes)**

Data indicate that there are various ways in which contents consumers react to the content creators on YouTube. These include providing comments which aim at acknowledging what the contents creators have shared on YouTube, asking some questions for more verification of what has been presented, critiquing the shared contents, and providing recommendations and requesting for certain videos to be made. Apart from comments, other reactions include likes and dislikes based on how satisfied or dissatisfied viewers are. Therefore, good comments, appreciations, and likes are given to videos that have helped learners whereas bad comments and dislikes are given to bad videos. Participants said:

*"It is important to connect with them (creators) because I want to know more about what the content creators were not able to share through videos."* (Participant 1)

*"I ask some questions, I suggest, and like some good contents."* (Participant 2)

*"(I) share personal experiences and applications when it is relevant, I will share brief anecdotes or examples of how I have been able to apply the skills or knowledge gained from the creator's video in my own journalistic work."* (Participant 3)



*"The best way which is very simple to interact is through using comments whereby I can able to ask questions by using comments."* (Participant 4)

*"Always I comment and like so as the contents creators will spread and going viral so as to make a channel being exists."* (Participant 5)

## **ii. Subscribing to the YouTube channels**

Another way of getting connected to the contents creators is through subscribing to their channels. By subscribing to relevant channels learners are able to stay updated with new educational videos as soon as they are posted. As noted earlier, YouTube is an interactive social medium meaning that it can also facilitate connection and interaction between contents creators and contents consumers. In this, overall data have shown that the majority of research participants interact and connect with content creators through reactions including comments, likes, dislikes, and subscribing to YouTube channels. Two participants said:

*"I mostly interact with contents creators through subscriptions of their channels, likes and comments,"* (Participant 1)

*"By subscribing to their YouTube channels for more contents, providing likes and sharing their YouTube channels."* (Participant 2)

### **4.4.12 Challenges associated with YouTube-based learning of journalism skills**

When engaging themselves in YouTube-based learning for acquiring journalism skills, it was realized that, research participants experience several constraints. Some of the constraints are technical and others appear to be non-technical. In general, the following were noted as those challenges: -

#### **i. Internet access**

Despite providing free journalism learning materials in the form of videos, it was realized the learners need internet access to open YouTube channels and view videos. Moreover, even though one could have internet access, one could still need more internet packages in order for them to view relatively long videos or those videos with high quality or High-Definition displays and sounds. Therefore, there are times when internet accessibility becomes relatively expensive for learners as they need money to buy internet packages. Apart from internet costs, another aspect preventing learners from making effective use of YouTube for learning is the unreliable internet as there are times when participants do not have stable internet connection. For instance, the following statements from participants capture well this observation:

*"Sometimes the platform requires much internet especially when one wants to watch HD Videos, some videos have high resolution, and others particularly demonstrative videos have lengths ranging from 30 minutes to hours, and this requires more internet."* (Participant 1)

*"The most challenge encountering me when using You Tube platform is the cost of having bundles for access Internet services all the time."* (Participant 2)

*"For me it is the issues of the internet connection,"* (Participant 3)

*"Unreliable network sometimes."* (Participant 4)

#### **ii. Language barrier**

Another problem that users face when engaging in YouTube-based learning is the inability to understand some languages or some terminologies used by presenters in the YouTube videos. Therefore, it becomes difficulty for some students to fully grasp what contents creators explain particularly in the procedural learning. Moreover, other participants complained that language may not be clear in terms of presenters' accents and graphics may be demonstrated without subtitles, and sometimes subtitles do not relate with what is being presented. For example, few participants said:

*"I sometimes face some tough vocabularies but I have to search some meanings in other sources like Google and others."* (Participant 1)

*"Language can be a barrier when (some) contents creators use language that the learner is not familiar with, for example, some contents creators are Arabs and Indians (who cannot use English Language)." (Participant 2)*

*"Demonstration is not enough; I want to know the language." (Participant 3)*

*"Sometimes descriptions and titles of the videos may not reflect video contents." (Participant 4)*

### **iii. Irrelevant contents**

It was also noted that not every information on YouTube is worth learning from because there are different irrelevant contents. Informants noted that such irrelevant contents contain misinformation when videos do not have facts, fake news, manipulated images, and obscene information. Also, it was explained that despite hosting plenty of videos, it makes it becomes relatively difficult for learners to clearly identify what information is worth learning from. Also, some videos are so short that they contain contents that seem inadequate when explaining certain journalism topics or practices, and other videos do not have good quality images and sounds. Moreover, two participants added:

*"Some videos have good comments, many views, and many likes but their contents are not relevant." (Participant 1)*

*"One of the challenges is that there can be different topics but they can be contrary to the topic of my interest." (Participant 2)*

### **iv. Pop-up adverts**

YouTube is a platform where different organizations and individuals can promote their products and services. Therefore, unless one subscribes to premium YouTube services, one will still get adverts before videos play or after the video has started playing. Thus, pop-up adverts which play after 5 minutes have become another challenge to learners as they interfere with their learning sessions. In this, one participant said:

*"The pop-up adverts destruct concentration when presentation continues and there is no option for skipping the adverts." (Participant 1)*

### **v. Ineffective interaction**

YouTube is also a social medium where contents creators and contents consumers can meet and interact. The interaction can be done through different comments and reactions that both viewers and contents creators provide about a particular video. However, it was realized from the data that in some instances this interaction is not effective. This situation tends to happen due to delayed or no replies as some contents creators may not provide instant replies, and negative comments from some participants. For instance, two participants noted:

*"Sometimes you can comment about things and no one responds." (Participant 1)*

*"People from comment section come and reply on my comment badly but I report them and they are blocked in the comment section." (Participant 2)*

### **vi. Balancing YouTube videos with formal education**

Although research participants engage in YouTube-based learning for acquiring journalism skills, this process is still informal and it all depends on individual student's efforts. In other words, it may not necessarily reflect the prescribed journalism studies provided in the current curriculum. That way, therefore, another challenge facing research participants is to be able to find a balance between contents provided in formal education and contents learned through YouTube educational videos. Although formal journalism education may entice ideas for students to learn more through YouTube-based learning, the latter remains a complimenting process to the former one. As a result, some concepts and processes explained in the formal education could be conflicting those explained on YouTube videos. Explaining more about this situation, one informant noted:

*"Integrating the knowledge and skills gained from YouTube content with the curriculum and learning objectives of my formal journalism education can sometimes require careful navigation and strategic planning." (Participant 1)*

## 4.5 Discussion

*Specific objective one: To explore the factors motivating Mass Communication undergraduate students to use YouTube as an interactive platform for learning journalism skills at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.*

### **i. Information and news contents updates**

The use of YouTube for information and news contents updates mirrors the cognitive needs as proposed in the Uses and Gratifications theory as proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974). Also, different scholars argue, from theoretical and empirical perspectives, that YouTube has become news platforms (Fahmy, 2008). It is a social medium that facilitates distribution of news stories to diverse audiences particularly the young generations (Muckerjee, 2016). As a platform that supports journalism practices (YouTube Basics for Journalists, 2023), findings have proven that research participants are among the audiences who visit different news media YouTube channels for being informed about different local and international events, and accessing information about various matters of their interests.

In their scholarly works, Santín and José-María (2020) and Sumiala and Tikka (2013) clearly observe that the presence, popularity, and globality of YouTube as a digital news mainstream have forced different media organizations and journalists to re-think on how to distribute their news stories to diverse audiences. These diverse audiences include the young generation particularly the young university students. This group of audiences is referred to 'The Net Generation'. It includes students who are characterised by digital literacy, digital-oriented life styles, and excessive use of Web 2.0 tools including YouTube for news and information gathering (Roodt & Peier, 2013; Berk, 2009; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Possibly it is these and many other unnoted characteristics of young university students influence them to consider YouTube as a suitable communication platform for getting information and news updates.

Moreover, based on Uses and Gratifications theory as proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), these findings reflect a study by Hanson and Haridakis (2008) which reveals that students' tendency of using YouTube for watching and sharing news at Kent State University in United States is also influenced by the need for getting information, and the need for sharing news videos among themselves. Apart from that, a study by Deori et al. (2022) on news videos published on YouTube channels owned by five Hindi TV stations in India realized that viewers are interested in news videos that encourage their participation in giving comments particularly on crimes, politics, protests, and health. This study also reflects findings obtained in the current research.

Also, in the current study, most research participants were found to be young university students, and therefore, it is no coincidence that young students are much interested in watching YouTube as a digital news platform. This could possibly be due to the influence of digital culture on the way young university students consume media contents. It also confirms the notion that YouTube covers news contents that traditional media cannot cover (Santín & José-María, 2020), or in the way that traditional media does not cover in relation to lifestyles of the young generation.

It should also be noted that apart from traditional print media (newspapers, periodicals, or books) and traditional electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), YouTube is part of social media as one of the Internet-based means of communication (Paul & Rai, 2021; Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011). This implies that the platform has expanded the information and news contents distribution in our societies. Moreover, there could be the possibility that much of contents that young students view on YouTube contain authenticity, spontaneity, and originality (Tolson, 2010, cited in Sumiala & Tikka, 2013) as it is in the traditional news and information distribution media. Furthermore, the findings also suggest that YouTube is easily accessible to majority of students. This could be due to the reason that the platform is embedded on hand-held internet supported devices including smartphones and tablets (Webwise, 2023). Moreover, YouTube aggregates visual news stories in terms of popularity and relevance and this appears to appeal diverse audiences (Sumiala & Tikka, 2013).

### **ii. Independent learning**

Based on the findings in the current study, one could conclude that YouTube has become an alternative learning centre for different university students. This platform has become one of the pillars that support independent or self-guided learning. As Lange (2019) contends, using YouTube learners can engage in socially oriented, engaging, and self-paced or self-directed informal learning processes, and thus acquire any kind of knowledge and skills from professionally or non-professionally produced video

contents. Students at the selected university may have realized this opportunity and decide to add it as a complementary study session to the formal education. Moreover, independent learning appears important for those communication students who want to gain more knowledge and skills outside the learning formal processes. Additionally, it implies that the self-guided learning could be more responsive to individual learners learning needs in terms of accessibility to educational contents and ones' own studying styles.

The idea of independent or self-regulated learning has been postulated by several scholars who consider YouTube to be a digital platform where motivated students take their own initiatives to search for knowledge by planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning efforts (Putri et al., 2020). YouTube has become part of students' efforts to attain knowledge and skills in various areas of their interests through independent learning, self-driven learning, or supplemental learning (Li, 2017; Liu & Luo (2021; Drotner, 2008; Lange, 2019). This could be influenced by the hypothesis that informal learning is enjoyable, open-ended, explorative, and focused on personal choices in learning (Lange, 2019).

Intention to acquire knowledge and skills about different topics of their interests is another reason motivating research participants to view YouTube videos. This factor suggests that YouTube has become a significant educational tool for several young university students at the selected university. It also confirms different theoretical and empirical-based based perspectives on the way this communication platform has become part of efforts to gain knowledge and skills through both formal and informal education. Therefore, findings in the current study confirm the scholarly arguments that there is a trend of web-based learning efforts among students in higher learning institutions (Noortyani, 2019; Mtega et al.; 2013). Since research participants embed YouTube-based learning in their academic endeavors, this aspect reflects the observation that this platform has become part of people's lives, and so it provides them with opportunities to share knowledge (Sharma & Sharma, 2021).

Knowledge and skills can now be easily accessed through websites and internet-based applications (Putri et al., 2020). YouTube, in this context, is one of the internet-based applications, and therefore, it appears that it has also transformed the way students seek knowledge and skills independent of formal classes at the university. This observation is evident when considering a study by Almobarraz (2016) which reveals that most students are interested in using YouTube for learning purposes outside classrooms. It also implies that the platform offers abundant journalism skills conveniently while ensuring that students remain grounded to their digital mobile devices including smartphones. One could also argue that digitality of internet-based communication platforms including YouTube offers educational contents differently from traditional sources of knowledge and skills including physical text books. Also, that could mean that physical learning materials are not as appealing to students as they once used to be. The differences could be that YouTube aligns with the young generation's approaches to knowledge and skills consumption including convenient and independent learning, interactivity between contents producers and contents consumers, preferences of using visual and interactive teaching and learning materials (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). As a result, their digital literacy and digital life styles draw young university students to learning through YouTube (Beautemps & Bresges, 2021). In addition, there could a possibility that YouTube-based learning facilitates informants' academic performance as the study by Baadel (2020) suggests.

Although the main goal of independent learning is still to acquire knowledge and skills, selection of media to accomplish this purpose is generally explained by Katz et al. (1974) in their Uses and Gratifications Theory (1974). However, the deliberate selection of YouTube for independent learning can be further explained by Self-Directed Learning Theory (SDL) developed by Malcolm Knowles (1975). This theory helps in explaining stages that one goes through when one wants to use YouTube for gaining journalism skills. The two theories, in this context, therefore, appear to complement each other even though one comes from communication discipline and the other one comes from education discipline respectively.

### **iii. Abundant educational contents**

Abundance of learning journalism resources is found to be among the factors motivating students to engage in YouTube-based informal learning. As scholarly explained, YouTube is a home of diverse educational videos that demonstrate, narrate, and lecture (Sari, 2019; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Kwegyiriba et al., 2021). This information reflects a study by Abbas and Qassim (2020) which concludes that YouTube has educational potentialities as it hosts various learning materials for students

to gain skills from. The presence of various videos as learning resources on YouTube suggests that the platform has become an alternative digital library and classroom with boundless and limitless capacity to accommodate vast amount of appropriate and useful journalism knowledge and skills. It has become an alternative to textbooks for knowledge delivery (Almobarraz, 2016). In relation to the current study, Gracella and Nur (2019) conclude that YouTube is an educational social medium as it provides various audio and visual learning resources and gives access to students to get various learning materials. Also, Li (2017) argues since learning can take place through various forms of media, then that makes YouTube a communication platform where communication students can enrich and develop their journalism knowledge and skills. These educational contents are provided by numerous organization and individual contents creators, and they also considered relatively affordable. This implies that YouTube has become a ground for different experts and non-experts to engage in knowledge and skills production and consumption making it a vast repository of educational videos. This knowledge and skills abundancy appear to attract students to engage in YouTube-based learning as they can learn almost anything related to journalism. That implies, much of the information they find is useful in their learning activities. For example, though it is not related to journalism, the study by Habes et al. (2020) found that among other factors, perceived usefulness of the YouTube influences students to use it for learning purposes. Moreover, when relating with Uses and Gratifications Theory (1974), one can conclude that the selection of YouTube as a medium for gaining journalism skills is also influenced the ability of the platform to provide what learners intend to get. This implies that had YouTube not been a repository of abundant learning resources, it would not have been a choice of many students.

#### **iv. YouTube Adaptability: Flexibility, Accessibility, and Easiness**

Unlike the fixed classrooms learning sessions, another factor that motivates students to engage in YouTube-based informal learning is its adaptability which includes flexibility, accessibility, and easiness. YouTube is flexible in providing access to learning materials to any learner, anywhere, at any time. In this observation Putri et al. (2020) and Rachmijati et al. (2019) notice that YouTube is easy to use and flexible in terms of time and place for any person who wants to access its educational videos. It provides access of educational videos supplemental learning resources to learners regardless of where they are (Gaille, 2017). The flexibility and accessibility of the YouTube educational videos could also be among the reasons that encourage students to engage in YouTube-based learning. Moreover, other informants claimed that there is an easy in learning through this platform. Alongside perceived usefulness, this perceived easiness of YouTube-facilitated learning has also been realized by Maziriri et al. (2020).

Although the Uses and Gratifications theoretical perspective relates media choice and the needs to be fulfilled, it still does not explain other aspects including flexibility, contents accessibility, and easiness as the contributing factors in using the selected media. This gap invites other theoretical perspectives particularly Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) as proposed by Fred Davis in 1984. The model suggests that a particular information technology outlet can either be accepted or rejected based on two major factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness (PU): the model postulates that people adopt and make use of a particular technology as they believe that it can facilitate their activities. In addition, in perceived ease of use (PEOU), people tend to make use of a particular technology on the basis that it is easy to use. Data obtained in the current study have also revealed that research participants engage in YouTube-facilitated learning due to perceived ease of using this digital communication platform. In their study, Yaacob and Saad (2020) found that apart from the perceived usefulness (PU) and social influence, perceived ease of use (PE) also determines students' use of YouTube as a learning platform. In other words, YouTube does not require any specialized knowledge and skills in operating it, it is an easy-to-use or user-friendly, and flexible communication platform. Anyone with the right tools including internet access and internet-enabled digital device such as computer and smartphone can take advantage of its educational values.

#### **v. Entertainment**

Data have also revealed that YouTube is among communication platforms that students use for entertainment of different kinds be it music, movies, and memes. As noted earlier, YouTube has become a virtual space for providing entertaining and mind-refreshing videos contents (Lee et al., 2017). It is worth noting that there are many other internet-based platforms that provide entertaining contents, however, students' preference to also use YouTube for the similar purpose implies that audio-visual contents offer much better enjoyment as well. Moreover, the tendency of accessing refreshing video

contents on this digital platform signifies that it matches with digital culture emerging among different young university students. Additionally, it appears that contents creators and distributors of video contents like movies, music, and the like have also realized potentialities of using YouTube as a powerful digital platform to reach vast audiences particularly young students.

Further observation suggests that ability of this platform to accommodate abundant materials for education, news and information, as well as entertaining is what makes YouTube an-all-in one digital communication platform for university students. As a result, it becomes much easier for students to access all the contents on YouTube as one single digital medium of communication. Moreover, the indicated data appear to coincide with different scholarly points of views on entertainment aspect. In this, it is observed that YouTube has largely influenced communication in different areas of people's lives including education, journalism practices, marketing and advertising, and entertainment (Pereira, 2020; Kwan et al., 2008 cited in Alhamami, 2013). Apart from that, data confirm that media audiences are moved by the desires to fulfil the affective needs when selecting YouTube as a communication medium. As explained by Katz et al. (1974), affective needs include desires to respond to emotional, feelings, or pleasure needs particularly entertainment.

#### **vi. Contents creation and monetization**

Another key aspect of the concept and practice of Web 2.0 is that its various internet-based communication platforms including YouTube facilitate the so-called user-generated contents. Shelly and Frydenberg (2011) as well as Lister et al. (2009) notice that in Web 2.0 internet pages have become more interactive, allowing users to not only access and share information, but to participate in generating their own contents. Therefore, there is a possibility that this new internet ability to support users-generated digital contents encourages young university students to own media platforms and turn them into their own online communication channels. Data from research participants have revealed that there are those students who look at YouTube as an opportunity to become not only as content consumers, but rather contents creators. This students' ownership of YouTube is what makes the platform become a social medium of communication as well (Gladys et al., 2019). As noted earlier, apart from allowing users to watch videos and subscribe to different YouTube channels, the site allows users to create their own personal YouTube channels and upload videos for others to watch (Webswise, 2023).

From empirical point of view, in their study, Sumiala and Tikka (2013) realized that YouTube encourages amateur journalists to publish news contents. In this context, one could suggest that, depending on the nature of contents uploaded, students who engage in YouTube-based contents creation have become amateur journalists or simply contents creators. However, in most instances it appears that most of contents creators intend to make money. Based on this observation, YouTube has become platform for monetization of news contents and thus generate revenues (Santín & José-María, 2020; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008). This happens as individuals and organizations use it for content creation, distribution, marketing, and promotion of their contents (Santín & José-María, 2020). In general, YouTube in this context becomes a communication platform for young communication university students to express and sell their ideas, opinions, knowledge, and skills to other audiences. This suggests that the mainstream media houses are no longer the key players in journalism and mass communication at large as YouTube and other digital platforms emerge and spread.

Theoretically, unlike cognitive, social integrative, and affective needs confirmed in this study, the need for becoming content creators and making money on YouTube is not directly reflected in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U & G) developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. However, it indirectly verifies the gratifications of cognitive need. This means that once one attains knowledge, skills, and other necessary information, then one can be in a good position to produce ones' own videos contents which can earn one money. Additionally, this effort to learn in order to become contents creators could be related to gratifications of personal integrative needs. It appears to be part of self-esteem needs when people use media as gateways to position themselves in the society (Nikata, 2021). Therefore, becoming a content creator on YouTube earns a person an opportunity of identifying themselves among the online community members.

*Specific objective two: To determine the kinds of journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students learn through YouTube as an interactive platform at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.*

#### **a. Video genres: Demonstration, lectures, and narrations**

Findings have revealed that YouTube accommodates different genres of educational videos, and that research participants prefer watching a mix of them for learning journalism skills. In general, there are those who prefer watching tutorials or educational videos that demonstrate how technical things like graphics designing work. Others prefer learning through lectures on journalism, and there are those who prefer watching educational videos like documentaries which narrate different aspects related to journalism. This observation mirrors the aspect that YouTube provides educational videos that demonstrate, narrate, and lecture (Sari, 2019; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Kwegyiriba et al., 2021). Demonstration videos help students in terms of procedural learning. This reflects the practicality of journalism in which practitioners have to engage in putting theories in applications. As Kwegyiriba et al. (2021) notices, YouTube has become an inspirational tool for learning and practical application. It provides alternative explanations and procedures to complex ideas and procedures (Sharma and Sharma (2021) as it contains simple explanations and demonstrations (McCormick et al., 2010).

Apart from that, lectures are simply focused on general knowledge about journalism, and they add more knowledge to students' understanding about this profession. Theoretical knowledge is also important because communication students need to understand the basic principles of what makes journalism a field of study and practice. Narrative videos are crucial in gaining other skills including multimedia storytelling through documentaries. Barker (2014) observes that among other skills, storytelling abilities are also crucial in journalism practices.

#### **b. Journalism skills learned**

Data have generally shown that **research participants engage in YouTube-based learning for acquiring different journalism skills. Most of the skills appear to relate with practicality of the discipline itself. They include** graphics designing, writing and editing, photojournalism, contents creation skills, interviewing skills, multimedia storytelling, and news presentation skills. These acquired journalism skills confirm gratifications of cognitive needs as stipulated in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U & G) developed by Katz et al. (1974). They are also the proof that YouTube is an educational social medium with potentialities to not only inform and entertain audiences, but to also educate them. The skills can be further grouped into media contents creation and production skills communication and news presentation skills.

##### **i. Media contents creation and production skills**

Data have indicated that research participants prefer learning different skills related to contents creation and production skills. For example, Barker (2014) emphasizes that one must have an eye for news skills as part of being able to produce media contents. The created and produced media contents are for different media outlets including radio, television, and internet-based communication platforms such as social media and websites. These contents and production skills are mostly practical in nature and thus one can argue that they are technical journalism skills. They include news and scripts writing and editing. In this, Wong and Hodson (2009) suggest that writing skills include not only news writing, but also developing scripts for broadcasts, and writing subtitles and captions for visual news. Based on empirical reflection, a study by Olasina (2017) established that YouTube-facilitated groups outperformed the control group in terms of academic writing, and Noortyani (2019) found that research participants have freedom to learn different concepts and skills related to news writing from watching news writing videos on YouTube.

Other skills are graphics designing, photojournalism or photography, and video shooting. These journalism skills reflect different scholarly perspectives. For example, Clearly and Cochie (2011) suggest that journalism skills that one needs to gain include writing and editing skills, multimedia production, video shooting, as well as designing skills. Moreover, Guo and Volz (2021) add that, journalists must be capable of writing and editing, video shooting (in photography), operating broadcasts equipment, using software including Adobe create suit, website and social media production (contents creation), and audience analysis.

In graphics designing, it was realized that students follow procedures as demonstrated on YouTube tutorials in using designing programmes including Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Premier Pro, Adobe InDesign and other editing apps tutorials. This observation mirrors what Guo and Volz (2021) insist on journalists to have abilities to use designing programmes including Adobe create suit. Moreover, other graphics-related designing skills include photo editing, logo designing, adverts, motion graphics, and newspaper production using Adobe InDesign. Also, through tutorials, students learn about making publications such as flyers and brochures. Moreover, the fact that majority of the



communication students learn graphics designing skills suggests that these abilities are crucial in creating audio-visual news contents. Audio-visual materials including videos and print media are basic tools that any journalist can use in their practices.

Focusing on learning media contents creation and production skills through YouTube-facilitated learning implies that YouTube tutorials provide easy-to-understand procedures as compared to what students learn in formal education. As noted earlier, contents creators on YouTube try as much as they can to provide straightforward and simplified alternative explanations and demonstrations of different practices (Kwegyiriba et al., 2021; Sharma & Sharma, 2021; McCormick et al., 2010). The fact that the site enables students to learn by doing makes YouTube an interesting communication platform for communication students. Apart from that, data have indicated most students prefer using Adobe as their designing programme. This suggests that the programme could be widely in graphics designing, it is recommended by many people, it is relatively affordable, or it is relatively easy to use when one intends to create graphics.

## **ii. Communication and news presentation skills**

Apart from creating and production skills, students also focus on learning other aspects of journalism skills particularly communication and news presentation skills. Being a communication profession, journalism requires that one is knowledgeable and skilled in terms of engaging with audiences and delivering different media contents to one's audiences. Based on the data, it is pretty clear that students engage in YouTube-based learning for gaining interviewing skills, multimedia storytelling, and news presentation skills. Carpenter (2009, cited in Himma-Kadakas & Palmiste (2018) urges that, apart from contents creation and production skills, journalists need to have interviewing skills, communication skills, and news reporting skills. In connection to that, Barker (2014) suggests that interviewing and storytelling abilities, which could be attributed to documentaries and other narrations, are also important skills in journalism.

In their study, Wong and Hodson (2009) suggest that in gaining interviewing skills, be it for one-on-one, groups, or documentaries interviews, one has to become acquainted with abilities to ask questions and to make follow-ups of information, and one needs to have anchoring skills for radio and television broadcasts, as well as for hosting audio-visual news programmes. In general, it is possible that through watching different news programmes, documentaries, live-coverages, and other informational videos on YouTube channels, research participants are able to capture and imitate what other presenters are doing in practice. This suggests that not only is YouTube a communication platform for learning through demonstrations or video tutorials, but also through imitating and copying from other presenters. Moreover, data have revealed that there are several YouTube channels on which informants learn journalism skills, these **include university educational YouTube channels**, international and local established news media, as well as individual content creators or YouTubers.

## **c. Determinants of good educational videos on YouTube**

Given the presence of many video contents on YouTube, it is fair to suggest that not all materials are related to journalism. In this, Ruokamo (2000), Ruokamo et al. (2002, 2003), and Karppinen (2005) suggest, videos should be constructive and individual so that learners are able to produce knowledge on their own, contextual to make learners feel liveliness of learning, and emotional to make learners have joyful, interesting, and appealing YouTube-facilitated learning experience. It also has to be attractive, motivational not boring, relevant, and emotionally appealing so that one enjoys what one is watching (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Sefton-Green, 2004 cited in Lange, 2019). In the current study, findings have indicated that learners are keen in determining what materials to take and what materials not to take. Therefore, when selecting good educational videos for learning journalism skills, research informants use the following determinants: -

### **i. Video technicalities**

It was noted that students consider different technicalities of the educational videos they intend to watch. These aspects are based on good graphical displays of the videos including cover photos, videos resolution, length of the videos, audio and visual quality, and contents arrangements. Cihangir and Çoklar (2021) suggest that good educational videos must base on good visual and audio quality. Therefore, when the uploaded videos contain these good graphical characteristics, then chances are that they have educational values that students are looking for. For example, in their study, Beautemps and Bresges (2021) urge that those engaging in leisure or informal learning should select videos with good flow of topic introduction, presentation of materials, and conclusion, and good audio and visual quality



of videos. Moreover, Alhamami (2013) insists that good educational videos can be determined by considering quality of sound, quality of pictures, length of the videos, tags, descriptions, and labels of what is being presented. In general, data suggest that learners are already informed of the kinds of educational videos that will help them gain journalism skills.

## **ii. Video contents**

Apart from looking at the video technicalities, most of research participants also consider video contents to determine whether what they want to watch has any journalism skills they intend to gain on YouTube. In this, students consider relevancy of the videos in terms of what they want learn, contents flow, accuracy language, ethics, valid/reputable sources or verified YouTubers/credible accounts, and how current a video is. This aspect ensures that learners get relevant, accurate, verified, useful, and up-to-date journalism skills contents that will be applicable to them. Emphasizing on this observation, Beautemps and Bresges (2021) notice that videos must be presented by credible presenters, contain interesting topics and reliable contents derived from scientific knowledge. Also, good educational videos should have understandable lectures, present adequate knowledge on a subject matter (Cihangir & Çoklar, 2021). Apart from that, language appropriateness, well-preparedness of videos, validity of the sources, contents relevance, and disclaimers for accuracy have been emphasized by Mady and Baadel (2020) and Alhamami (2013).

## **iii. Viewers' engagement**

YouTube Basics for Journalists (2023) observe that YouTube provides opportunities for audiences' engagement through subscriptions, reactions, and user-generated contents. Audiences become active participants because they can create their own contents (Hanson & Haridakis, 2008). Being a Web 2.0 communication platform, YouTube provides access to contents creators and contents consumers to interact and share ideas and opinions in the form of comments and reactions about the uploaded videos. In this, Beautemps and Bresges (2021) explain that YouTube supports community integration and interaction between learners and content creators through comments. In connection to that, Abbas and Qassim (2020) see YouTube as not just a platform for uploading, viewing, and downloading videos, but also for commenting on videos. Also, as noted earlier, YouTube allows others to comment on various videos (Fat et al., 2011). Not only that, but the platform enables viewers to subscribe to channels that they like or contain valid educational information for more videos. In general, YouTube facilitates viewers' engagements. As a result, this viewers' engagement aspect enables learners to determine whether a video is worth watching and learning from. And therefore, one can learn from comments of viewers (Lange, 2019).

Data have indicated that students consider comments, reactions including likes and dislikes, number of views and subscribers, as well as recommendations from others as ways of determining how good or a bad YouTube channels or videos are. This observation reflects the suggestion that comments of the viewers should also be checked for determining good educational videos (Mady & Baadel, 2020). And, videos have to be interactive, collaborative, and conversational so that creators and viewers learn from each other (Ruokamo, 2000; Ruokamo et al., 2002, 2003; Karppinen, 2005). In their study, Djerf-Pierre et al. (2019) found that YouTube facilitates news consumers' discussions. Also, Lee et al. (2017) found that learners who watched educational videos on YouTube expressed positive sentiments and thus demonstrated that, as an online repository of knowledge through educational videos.

Moreover, Bruns (2018) found that most comments of viewers of YouTube videos expressed emotions, blame and calls for action. Hence, comments and reactions are important since they can inform viewers in advance what is presented in the videos. Moreover, they also indicate the contents consumers also have their says and abilities to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and skills. They simply verify how user-generated contents have become part of digital media culture and contents consumption on YouTube.

Ultimately, idea and practice of viewers' engagement on YouTube mirror the social integrative needs as described in the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The fact that YouTube can facilitate interaction between both contents creators and contents consumers confirm what Katz et al. (1974) propose in their theory. YouTube allows viewers to comment and react on videos, to suggest and discuss the posted contents in order for contents creators and other to respond. The interaction, collaboration, and participation in creating user-generated contents on YouTube reflect the basic features of social media

platforms (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Lister et al., 2009). Also, subscriptions to YouTube channel suggest the desire of viewers to continue being connected to their favourite media contents creators.

#### **d. Self-directed informal learning process**

In the selected research location, YouTube-facilitated learning is not yet part of formal education or formal learning process. However, data have revealed that there is a particular pattern or general process that research informants follow when engaging in practical YouTube-based informal learning. It involves deciding what to learn/choosing a topic, setting learning objectives, preparing conducive environment and resources, learning while practicing, and then assessing oneself to find out whether one can practice the journalism skills that one has acquired from watching YouTube videos. This process appears to be mimicking the formal learning process and it is more specifically for procedural learning process.

Although YouTube as social medium provides access to learning materials to students, and thereby gratifies cognitive needs of gaining journalism knowledge and skills as postulated in Katz et al. (1974) in their Uses and Gratifications theory, this theory does not capture how learning takes place. This lack of informal learning procedure invites in the Self-Directed Learning as proposed by Malcolm Knowles (1975). The theory describes a process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

Data from most of research participants have largely mirrored what Knowles (1975) proposes his Self-Directed Learning Theory. In this, it has been clearly realized that students start with identifying kinds of journalism knowledge and skills they want to learn. Then they develop some learning goals or objectives, and determine kinds of YouTube educational videos they wish to watch for learning journalism skills. Moreover, they even make sure that they have conducive learning environment and repeat things they watch to find out whether they have understood YouTube-facilitated lessons. Self-directed learning can be applied in informal learning whereby learners have full control over and autonomy in all the stages of the learning process (Loeng, 2020). Based on self-directed learning perspective, Lee et al. (2017) found that YouTube facilitates an online environment for self-directed learning. Also, Leach (2000) realized that research participants perceive self-directed learning as an aspect of having choices, taking control, making decisions, having freedom, and learning in one's own way and learning with others.

*Specific objective three: To examine how YouTube-based learning compliments journalism skills that Mass Communication undergraduate students acquire in formal class sessions at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza.*

#### **a. Educational values of YouTube**

##### **i. Videos for procedural learning**

General findings have revealed that YouTube has become a valuable tool that compliments and thus enhances formal practical journalism education. This is evident in the study by Iftikhar et al. (2019) which concludes that learning tutorials on YouTube help students to acquire software skills. It provides diverse and timely journalism knowledge and skills, and enhances flexible and self-guided practical learning. In most instances, YouTube has been facilitating procedural learning. As noted earlier, study by Kwegyiriba et al. (2021) found that YouTube is a good platform for learning and practical application, it facilitates learning through experiments (Lange, 2019), and provides alternative explanations, procedures, and demonstrations to complex ideas and procedures (Sharma & Sharma, 2021; McCormick et al., 2010). Moreover, a study by Lee and Lehto (2012) found that technology fit, content richness, vividness, and YouTube self-efficacy predict the perceived usefulness of YouTube as a tool for procedural instruction learning. As a result, engaging in YouTube-based learning has been a good experience to the majority of the research participants. This mirrors the study by Kelsen (2009) which found that YouTube-based learning is interesting, relevant, beneficial, and to somehow motivating.

##### **ii. Enjoyable learning experience**

Additionally, data have revealed that YouTube-facilitated learning is associated with a sense of enjoyment. This could be due to its flexibility and convenience, and ability to host not only educational, but also entertaining and informational videos contents. This sense of enjoyment in using YouTube for learning purposes appears to go beyond gratifications of one's cognitive needs as proposed in the Uses

and Gratifications theory (1974). It implies that selection of media is not only based on needs fulfilment, but on the ability of the media to produce leisure and enjoyment. For example, a study by Lee et al. (2017) found that participants' affective sharing, gratitude, and enjoyment demonstrated that YouTube facilitates an online environment for self-directed learning. Also, Alwehaibi (2011) realized that YouTube is enjoyable and entertaining, and thus motivates students to watch, read, write, discuss, interact, and take part in learning activities. In connection to that, apart from being interpersonal between viewers and creators of videos, open-ended, explorative, and focused on personal choices in learning, YouTube is enjoyable (Lange, 2019). Furthermore, in their theory, Katz et al. (1974) have not only postulated that media can fulfil cognitive needs, but also the affective needs. This happens when users select certain media outlets so as to respond to their emotional, feelings, or pleasure needs. In this context, YouTube appears to be a communication platform which enhances enjoyment or pleasure to the users. This aspect explains more why students select YouTube for entertainment or leisure learning practices (Beautemps & Bresges, 2021).

### **iii. Participants interaction**

Moreover, some participants are able to interact and connect with contents creators through reactions including comments, likes, dislikes, and subscribing to YouTube channels. And therefore, as a social medium, YouTube enables contents creators and consumers to connect and interact openly, form online communities, and thus, participate in generating and sharing different media contents in the form of videos (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Paul & Rai, 2021). This observation reflects the social integrative need of connecting with others as postulated by Katz et al. (1974) in their Uses and Gratifications theory. Additionally, it proves the observation that YouTube is basically a social medium (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011; Paul & Rai, 2021).

### **b. Challenges associated with YouTube-based learning**

#### **i. Financial constraints and unreliable internet access**

Data analysis has also indicated that there are several challenges constraining the effective utilization of YouTube for learning journalism skills at the selected university. These include failure to access internet when they do not have money to pay for internet and unreliable internet connectivity. These financial and technical issues could make one question the affordability of using YouTube for learning. It also suggests that the platform is not as free as one might think, only the hosted educational contents are. Moreover, the situation implies that there is a huge digital divide in terms of accessibility of free and reliable internet at the selected university. Although YouTube is a knowledge and skills repository, it requires internet accessibility in order for the learners to retrieve and watch the hosted educational videos (Gaille, 2017; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Burke & Snyder, 2008). Therefore, as Putri et al. (2020) observe, financial constraints and unreliable internet access hinder effective YouTube-based learning.

#### **ii. Language barrier**

YouTube is a digital medium of communication, that being the case, communication participants have to ensure that they strive to create a common understanding about educational videos contents. Ruokamo (2000), Ruokamo et al. (2002, 2003), and Karppinen (2005) suggest that in order for digital and videos materials to support effective learning, they have to be interactive, collaborative, and conversational so that creators and viewers learn from each other. This observation simply affirms the fundamental purpose of communication, that is, to make ideas, thoughts, or information common to each other (Pearson & Nelson, 1997; Wood, 2006). However, data have shown that language barrier emerges when contents presenters use difficult terminologies, do not speak common languages, and do not include subtitles in their videos. Despite being available in more than 76 languages in over 88 countries (Pereira, 2020), language remains a challenge to different research participants. This situation suggests that there may not be a clear guiding framework on how language should be when educators publish their videos contents. Also, it suggests that both contents producers and consumers have not yet realized and taken full advantage of subtitles feature embedded on YouTube itself.

#### **iii. Irrelevant contents**

Being able to accumulate abundant information in terms of audio-visual and text materials does not mean that everything is worth it on YouTube. This is because the current research has revealed that there are plenty of irrelevant contents on this digital communication platform. Those materials are found not to embed any educational, informational, or entertaining materials that could help YouTube users satisfy cognitive, affective, social integration, or personal integrative needs as proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the Uses and Gratifications (1974). The irrelevant contents are

evident in other studies which found plenty of YouTube videos are educationally inaccurate, unreliable, or unvalidated (Gaille, 2017; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Burke & Snyder, 2008), defective and contain incorrect information (Zyskowski et al., 2016), and contain misleading information (Girmenez-Perez et al., 2018). Presence of information that does not help learners could mean that YouTube accommodates digital contents from anyone who wishes to become contents creator. This is one the key characteristics of Web 2.0 communication platforms as they allow contents consumers to become contents creators. YouTube, therefore, has become an internet-based platform supporting user-generated video contents of different kinds (Liu & Luo, 2021). Moreover, it also suggests that some students and other contents consumers have not yet been able to search for contents that suit their educational needs by considering the built-in feature of filtering relevant videos only, or automatic subtitles enhanced by speech detection feature (Pereira, 2020).

#### **iv. YouTube-based adverts**

In several occasions, it has been noted that YouTube has also become a monetization communication platform. This is due to the fact that the site has also influenced online marketing and business activities through providing spaces for adverts of different goods and services. As noted earlier, YouTube has become an influential tool in different other practices including marketing and advertising (Pereira, 2020; Kwan et al., 2008 cited in Alhamami, 2013). However, YouTube-based adverts interfere the learning sessions (Gaille, 2017; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Burke & Snyder, 2008) and thus become another challenge to effective YouTube-based learning as noted by research participants. Unless one pays for premium YouTube contents which are free from adverts (Cihangir & Çoklar, 2021), then one will continue encountering them before and during the study sessions. In general, learning has to be done in conducive environment that is free of any destructions and disturbances. Therefore, adverts may hinder effective learning of journalism skills they simply pop up to promote products, services, and ideas that may not relate with what one wants to learn.

Empirically, Masele and Rwehikiza (2021) realized that the studied universities use YouTube for promoting admission procedures, life at college, scholarship opportunities, university events, and new academic programmes. However, the presence of adverts imply that marketers have also realized the potentialities of YouTube as a platform that can deliver information of what they offer to numerous groups of audiences. It also suggests that indirectly YouTube contents are not as free as one could think of them since one has to pay for premium services in order not to be exposed by those annoying adverts.

#### **v. Ineffective interaction between users and contents creators**

Ruokamo (2000), Ruokamo et al. (2002, 2003), and Karppinen (2005) suggest that in order for digital and videos materials to support effective learning, they have to be interactive, collaborative, and conversational so that creators and viewers learn from each other. Moreover, the idea of interaction and collaboration in producing media contents is at the core feature of new digital media. As noted earlier, not only does YouTube provide access to numerous videos contents, but also provides a space for viewers and contents creators to interact through comments on various videos (Fat et al., 2011). However, as it has been realized, there is no effective and continuous interaction between contents producers and contents consumers. This is because, as research participants notice, one of the challenges facing YouTube-facilitated learning is failure of contents creators to respond to contents consumers' comments. Several factors could be contributing to this situation including vast amounts of comments and irrelevant comments from contents consumers. As noted, YouTube accommodates abundant audio-visual materials uploaded and viewed by many contents' creators and contents' consumers respectively. As a result, there are plenty of comments on videos and that makes it difficult for one to respond to every one of them, and to interact with every video viewer on YouTube.

#### **vi. Imbalance between YouTube videos and formal education**

It has also been realized that some of the things that students learn in formal classroom sessions do not reflect what is required to be taught in their communication programmes. It appears that students' efforts to engage in YouTube-facilitated informal learning depends on their own interests to do so and not as required by journalism courses instructors at the university. Either way, YouTube is a free communication platform for everyone to express their contents on. There may not be a unified curricula or framework that guide contents creators when generating and publishing their audio-visual materials for education, information, or entertainment purposes. Contents contributors particularly individuals maybe mostly driven by their own interests, others' recommendations, and imitating other YouTubers. Moreover, the abundancy of videos on this platform makes it difficult for one to capture and match

videos contents with particular syllabuses. Additionally, this suggests that most of educators and higher learning institutions including the selected university in the current study have not yet adopted YouTube in their formal education. As a results, YouTube-based educational contents are published by few enthusiastic contents creators and media organizations which take advantage of this platform to distribute their news contents, documentaries, and other journalism programmes.

In general, when contextualizing the discussed challenges within the Uses and Gratifications Theory as proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch (1974), it can be realized that media outlets including YouTube may not be as effective as explained in the proposed theory. Moreover, the theory itself does not clearly explain how gratifications towards cognitive, affective, social integrative, and personal integrative needs can be achieved when media both media and users are constrained in some circumstances. Hence, given the observed challenges, students may not be in good positions to learn the journalism skills of their interests as effective and smoothly as expected.

## **Conclusions**

Although there is no formal way of assessing whether or not, and the extent to which students gain journalism skills through YouTube-based informal learning as compared to formal education, based on the general findings from the research participants, this study concludes that YouTube is used as an interactive platform for journalism skills learning among communication undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Mwanza. This is because most of research participants consider YouTube as a good communication platform with variety of affordable and accessible educational contents. And, therefore, the platform supports their learning efforts to acquire different journalism skills. Moreover, factors that influence YouTube-based learning include affordability of using the platform, abundant journalism learning materials, YouTube popularity, convenient and flexible learning, and easiness in using YouTube for learning. Moreover, students engage in YouTube-based learning when they want to develop practical journalism skills and to get clarification and additional information topics of their interests. Apart from that, the study has found that the simplicity, straightforwardness, and more practical demonstrations make learners understand complex ideas, processes, and terminologies related to journalism.

Furthermore, through watching tutorials or demonstrative videos, lectures, and narrations about various journalism topics and practices, research participants have been able to acquire different journalism skills. These skills include media contents creation and production skills including news and scripts writing and editing, graphics designing, photojournalism or photography, and video shooting. Others include photo editing, logo designing, adverts, motion graphics, and newspaper production. Other skills include writing newsworthy and feature stories, news presentation skills, as well as interviewing skills. Also, participants learn communication and news presentation skills particularly interviewing skills, multimedia storytelling skills, and news presentation skills. Moreover, the identified journalism skills are obtained from different university educational YouTube channels, international and local established news media, as well as individual content creators or YouTubers.

The current study evidently demonstrates that YouTube is transforming the learning paradigms among young students particularly at the selected university. The fact that research participants engage in self-guided learning of journalism skills through YouTube implies that the traditional and fixed classrooms learning sessions no longer provide satisfactory learning experiences and journalism skills. It also implies that the current formal journalism education is provided in ways that do not suit students' expectations in terms of how they prefer to pursue journalism skills in higher learning institutions. Independent learning, therefore, seems to be much better than the fixed education system for students to explore more than what they learn in classrooms sessions. This means that YouTube has become a digital university or alternative school whereby journalism skills as defined and taught in the perspectives of individual and organisational contents creators to cater for the needs of students. However, this could either oppose or reflect journalism skills as defined by educators and taught in formal classes. Either way, three questions emerge in this scenario, one being on how to strike a balance between formal and informal journalism skills learning practices, the other being how to evaluate YouTube-based learning of journalism skills so as to clearly establish an understanding about the way it compliments formal journalism education, and the last being on preparedness of formal education system to accommodate YouTube-based learning in terms of certification and recognition of contents creators in facilitating journalism skills sharing.

The abundance of journalism learning resources in the form of videos on YouTube provides unprecedented opportunities for any student to access journalism knowledge and skills conveniently. YouTube provides a whole new interesting and enjoyable ways of learning how journalism is practiced. The embedment of informational and news updates contents on YouTube makes it a multimedia educational platform that translate into leisure studying experience. YouTube has opened up new learning possibilities and horizons since individual and organisational contents creators have directly and indirectly democratised access to journalism knowledge and skills. As a result, the platform may have started minimising the inadequacy students face in terms of limited journalism learning resources provided in formal classrooms. Also, the fact that research informants consider YouTube as a communication platform that provide straightforward, simplified, and practical learning implies that learning is not about comprehending complex phenomena, but rather it is about grasping clear and concise, and contextually useful knowledge and skills that students eagerly pursue. This trend could call the whole formal learning process into question in terms of whether the current communication, media, and journalism curricular embed the internet-based communication platforms particularly YouTube in formal learning sessions.

Hence, YouTube has become a valuable tool that compliments and enhances formal journalism education as it facilitates procedural/practical journalism skills learning, provides diverse and timely journalism knowledge and skills, and enhances flexible and self-guided learning. And, the overall experience indicates that research participants enjoy using YouTube for acquiring journalism knowledge and skills. However, learners are constraints by failure to access internet when they do not have money to pay for internet packages, unreliable internet connectivity, language barrier when contents presenters use difficult terminologies, do not speak common languages, and do not include subtitles. In addition, other videos contain irrelevant contents, interference of pop-up adverts, ineffective interaction between contents creators and contents consumers, as well as imbalance between YouTube videos and formal education.

Likewise, empirical evidence obtained in this study largely affirm the Uses and Gratifications Theory as proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. This theoretical perspective associates the selection of media with their ability to gratify users' cognitive needs (knowledge and information); affective needs (emotional, feelings, or pleasure needs); personal integrative (self-esteem); and social integrative needs (social interaction and connectivity). Findings in the current study have also shown that students' choice of using YouTube appears to be purposely done due to their cognitive needs to acquire journalism knowledge and skills. The underlying reasons for selection of this platform, as noted earlier, include vast number of educational videos that offer journalism knowledge and skills, affordability of using YouTube, convenient and flexible learning, and easiness in using the platform. Not only knowledge and skills, further data analysis has also shown that students use YouTube for getting information and news contents updates about different topics and events respectively. Moreover, there has been a realization that YouTube satisfies not only the cognitive needs, but also affective needs of users as well. This is because YouTube is also used as a platform for entertainment during leisure time.

However, the current research has revealed findings that go beyond what Uses and Gratifications Theory comprehend. The theorists Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch basically focus on deliberate choice of media outlets for satisfying users' needs, but do not provide other details including how users can go about using the selected media to gratify their identified needs. For example, the theory is silent on the process of gaining knowledge and skills through a particular medium of communication, and whether or not the selected medium of communication is user-friendly despite being able to fulfil the identified needs. These weaknesses of Uses and Gratification Theory invite other theories to provide additional perspectives that may help explain not only what and why certain media outlets have been selected, but also how the selected media provide the expected gratifications.

Based on the observed situation, then the Self-Directed Learning Theory proposed by Malcolm Knowles (1975) can explain more about the tendency of communication undergraduate students to take their own initiatives to identify their cognitive needs, search for and deciding to choose YouTube as an appropriate source of journalism knowledge and skills, and to guide themselves in the process of independent learning for gaining the journalism knowledge and skills through videos posted on YouTube. Additionally, based on perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), Technological Acceptance Model by Fred Davis (1989) can also add to the current understanding about

YouTube-based informal learning. This model, therefore, explains whether, by selecting it, communication undergraduate students accept and perceive YouTube as both useful and easy to use source of acquiring journalism knowledge and skills. Ultimately, triangulating the three theoretical perspectives can provide a much more complete picture of how YouTube-based informal learning helps communication undergraduate students to study and gain journalism knowledge and skills.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The current study has revealed and thus empirically confirmed that there are several Mass Communication undergraduate students who engage in YouTube-based informal learning for acquiring and supplementing their journalism knowledge and skills. However, data obtained in the current study reflects information gathered from those few selected research participants at the selected university. Moreover, it is worth noticing that YouTube may be used by several other university students and individuals for similar or even more other purposes including information and news updates as well as for entertainment. These groups of YouTube users could be found within the selected research location and the selected Communication discipline or outside the selected location and the selected Communication discipline. In that case, based on the qualitative nature of the study, data may not be easily attributed to other groups of YouTube users other than the selected research participants. Based on this observation, therefore, it is recommended that quantitative researches be done in order to establish a wide understanding on the explored phenomenon.

Additionally, more similar studies should be done on YouTube-based informal and formal learning in other disciplines of studies and practices apart from journalism. For example, researches on use of YouTube for learning and practicing Public Relations, engineering, health, business and marketing, education, laws, and the like. This academic endeavor will provide a more understanding on how YouTube as a digital communication platform is and can be embedded in both formal and informal education practices particularly in higher learning institutions. Also, the studies should not only involve students as key research informants, but educators should also be consulted.

In connection to that, the further studies should examine how YouTube-based learning enables communication undergraduate students to acquire the identified specific journalism knowledge and skills at the selected university. These skills include graphics designing, graphics designing producing contents for television and radio broadcasts, photojournalism, multimedia storytelling and documentaries, and writing newsworthy and feature stories, news presentation skills as well as interviewing skills. Moreover, studies should examine the extent to which educational videos on YouTube facilitates students' academic performance as far as the acquired journalism knowledge and skills are concerned.

Apart from focusing on YouTube-based informal and formal learning, other studies should explore more about how YouTube is being used for information and news updates and entertainment. This is because the identified two critical roles of media were not the major focus of the current study but they were identified by different research participants. Understanding more about these two themes will expand academic and practical horizons on how new media platforms including YouTube have become alternative media in terms of contents distribution and consumption.

This study involved communication undergraduate students as key informants. Data revealed that the selected participants see the education values of YouTube as a communication platform. This is because YouTube provide flexible access to abundant learning resources about journalism. As a result, YouTube is and can be used by communication students for enriching and developing journalism knowledge and skills, and generate their own media contents. Therefore, this study recommends that communication undergraduate students in the fields of Mass Communication and Public Relations and Marketing engage themselves in YouTube-based learning and media contents creation culture. This is because, as noted in several occasions, this platform is home to numerous communication and journalism experts, media, and non-media organizations, as well as individual contents creators. All these sources of information make YouTube a vast online knowledge and skills repository that communication students can benefit from. Not only that, but as future communication practitioners, students should also engage in YouTube-based media contents creation and distribution because this site is open to anyone who wishes to engage in online publishing for different purposes be it educating, informing, influencing, or entertaining others as well. In other words, YouTube has also become a ground for practicing citizen journalism, marketing and business practices, entertainment contents, and the like. Communication

students, therefore, must realize and seize this opportunity to push forward the boundaries of communication and journalism practices to higher levels.

Much of theoretical and empirical literature support educational potentialities of YouTube in learning practices. This implies that journalism and media educators within communication discipline should start approaching YouTube as one of important teaching tool in imparting journalism knowledge and skills to communication students. This implies formal journalism education can be supported with prepared and distributed educational videos to students so that they can learn from them at their own convenient time. Since YouTube has been proven as a communication tool that hosts abundant learning resources and independent, leisure, or informal learning, then this implies that educators should take advantage of it by opening their YouTube channels, creating both theoretical and practical educational contents, and distributing the materials so that they supplement students' understanding and abilities to practice journalism in real life situations. Moreover, this effort can be facilitated by supportive policies that transform and improve the existing communication curricula, programmes, and courses. The policies can ensure that communication courses instructors embed YouTube videos in their teaching practices in higher learning institutions.

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